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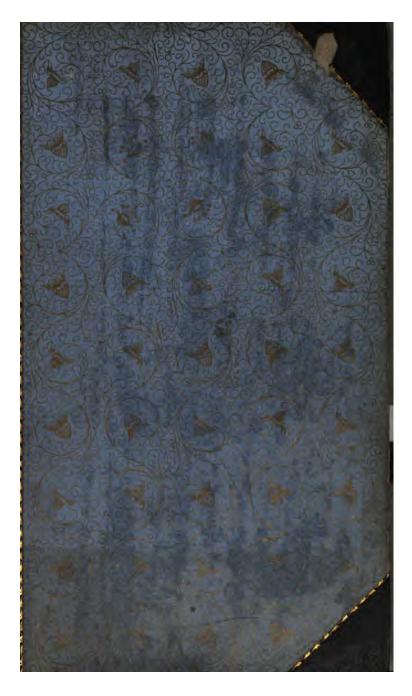
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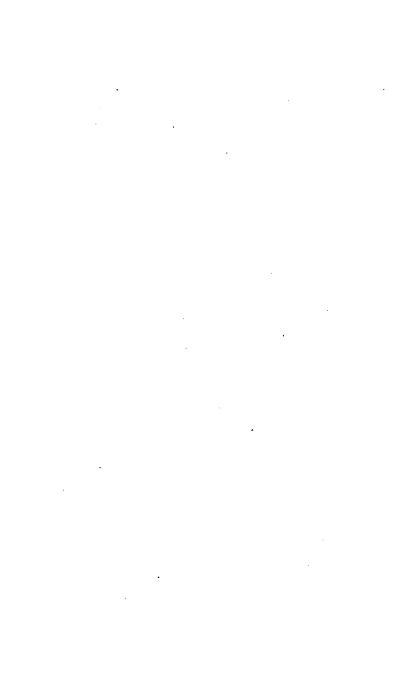
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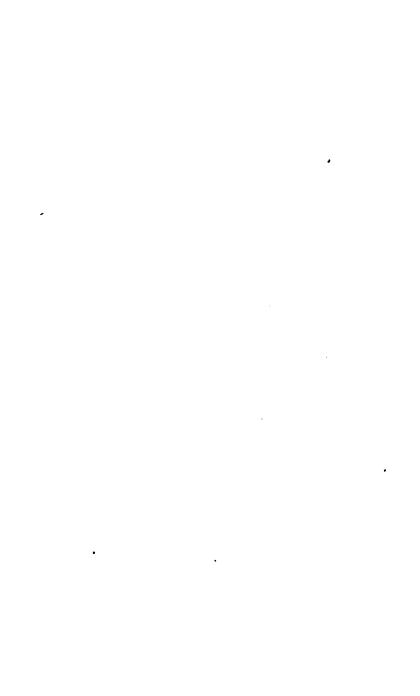


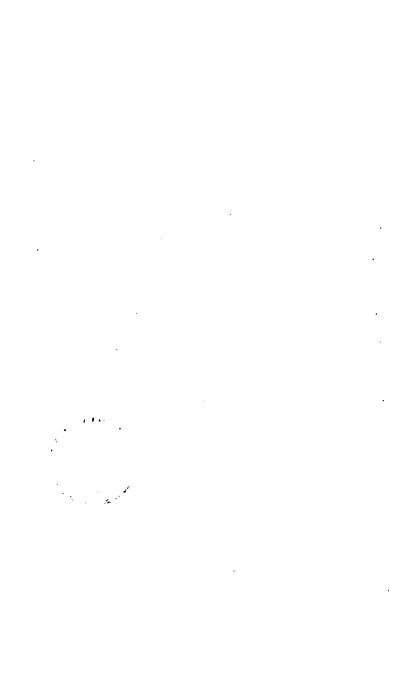






Planes





PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE;

on,

THE MODERN GRISELDA.

A Domestic Cale.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR, WHAT! Se-

Well-order'd home, man's best delight to make;
And by submissive windom, modest skill,
To raise the virtues, animate the bliss,
And sweeten all the toils of human life—
This be the female dignity and praise.
THOMSO:

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VOL I.



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TO THE READER.

WHOEVER honours these volumes by perusal will perceive that the admirable little work of Miss Edgeworth's, entitled "The Modern Griselda," induced the author to attempt proving, by an example, taken from our own times, that patient forbearance, and persevering kindness, may awaken the affection, and reform the conduct of a bad husband (not decidedly depraved in principle), as surely as perverseness and ill humour may lose the heart of a good one.

YOL. I.

In pursuing this plan, it was impossible to avoid making Griselda guilty of an error, in the object of her choice, since it is utterly improbable that any man of correct morals, and prudent habits, should, after his marriage with such a woman, become the character, which could, to such an extent, call for the fortitude, patience, and longsuffering of his virtuous wife: but as every woman is, in some measure, and under some modification, called to similar trials, it is presumed that her example may not be useless to those who have entered the marriage state, and the many troubles she experienced may operate as a warning to those who have not done it, since few women can be so situated as to have Griselda's apology

apology for marrying a character of sir Edward's description.

To tenderly-attached, but not happily-situated wives, this work is more particularly addressed; by such it will be read with interest; and it is the sincere hope of the author, that it may have some little effect on their minds. by encouraging them to adopt, or persist in that line of conduct, which nurtures the germ of virtue in their husbands, and proves their own hearts are deeply imbued with that spirit which "hopeth all things, endureth all things," and "giveth Patience her perfect svork."

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Patience and Perseverance.

CHAP. I.

"HOW it is possible for a woman of your habits, disposition, and principles, to live happily, or even to live at all, with such a man as sir Edward Langdale, I really cannot conceive," said Mrs. Barnet, with an air of great anxiety and tenderness, to Griselda Harcourt.

The young lady heard this address in silence; but a gentle sigh, and a look that besought candour in the judgment of her friend, were to the affectionate heart of Mrs. Barnet a sufficient reply; she therefore continued her address thus—"You

will tell me, perhaps, that sir Edward was the first, or, it may be, the only man that ever engaged your affections; and I grant, that seven years ago, when he first made love to you, that a more pleasing youth, of better understanding, or more amiable propensities, I have never met with; though, even then, he was spoiled by the excessive indulgence of his parents. I am however willing to grant all you can plead in his favour, and allow that, had he been permitted to marry you then, he would have become by that union a good man, an affectionate husband, and a delightful companion. But as, since his disappointment, his habits are become all that a prudent woman can dread, and a virtuous woman avoid. I really cannot bring myself to see you, Griselda, whom I have long known to be both, involve yourself in such a connection, without speaking plainly on a subject of such infinite importance. You have lived so long out of the world, my love, that I cannot help concluding

cluding it is your ignorance either of sir Edward's conduct, or of your own heart, or of the duties and dispositions required in the marriage state, that can induce you to fall into such an egregious error; for I cannot believe the passion which very naturally led you to choose him at seventeen, inspires you on the eve of twenty-five, unless, as solitude is the nurse of romance, you have been foolish enough to conclude that having loved him once, you must necessarily love him for ever; that first impressions can never be eradicated; that there is a fatality in affairs of the heart; and that——"

"Stop a moment, my dear Mrs. Barnet," said Griselda, mildly, "and, if you please, examine me on your own points, before you condemn me further. You have known me so long, and I am convinced have loved me so well, that I have a right to your most charitable judgment, since I must, in some measure, deserve an esteem which has now, for several years, survived an event

which generally weakens, or destroys, female friendships, your own marriage."

Mrs. Barnet pressed Griselda's hand, and taking courage in her cause, which was certainly a good one, thus proceeded-"You know, Griselda, that when his father, vexed at your want of fortune, absolutely prohibited his seeing you, and yours, piqued at this conduct in a man who was certainly by no means his superior, except in the circumstance of possessing more ready money at that period, laid his commands on you to see sir Edward no more, the immediate consequence to the young man was just what might have been expected, in a warm, but imperious mind; his grief know no bounds; and his anger towards both your parent and his own, was vented in all the reproachful language that passion could dictate, and bitter disappointment inspire: for some time he sought to engage you in a clandestine correspondence; but this your delicacy, and deep sense of duty, forbade; and when he found all his projects

of this kind fail, he sunk into a kind of sullen melancholy, much more afflicting to his father than his former intemperance; and this was the true reason of his making those overtures to your father, which were now, on his side, decidedly rejected; which, I must own, I then thought a very great pity, as undoubtedly you do; since, at this distance of time, and under very different circumstances, you are induced to listen to them."

"Pardon me," interrupted Griselda, "if
I assert that, in this respect, you are entirely mistaken. Had my father consented at this time, I should probably have married sir Edward immediately; both young, and gay, and but ill provided for, we should have sailed down the stream of dissipation together, and been wrecked on the first of those many rocks, which the young and unwary so often meet with: or, if we had escaped this evil, my want of fortune would have been a source of mortification, which I should have felt the more, the farther I advanced

advanced-in life; nor would the realization of my expectations, by any means, have afforded me the satisfaction it now But these are trifling and selfish considerations, when compared with the real good which has arisen from my disappointment at that time; for have I not," said she, in a quicker, but more tremulous voice, while her eyes filled with drops of pious recollection, "have I not, during this interval, been employed in the most awful of all duties?—I have been called on to smooth the pillow of death, to each of my dear parents. My poor father, during the short, but severe illness he sustained, derived his greatest comfort from the knowledge he had of my entire devotedness to my poor mother, whose health had long been delicate; and the manner in which his last words bequeathed this widowed parent to my unceasing watchfulness, implied so strongly the satisfaction he felt that I was at liberty to make her the only object of my solicitude, that I was, from that hour. hour, inspired with the same sensation: and amidst all my sorrow for my father's death, and the long, long scene of my mother's subsequent sufferings, still there was a little corner left for comfort in my heart; arising from the sense of being to her all that her widowed heart could find of blessedness on this side heaven."

" It is," said Mrs. Barnet, after a long pause, "it is because you have been ever so very affectionate a child, and have, in every situation of life, acquitted yourself with such unexampled goodness, that I cannot bear to think of your being thrown away, at last, on a man who might, it is true, have been at one time worthy of you: but who is now equally unfitted to estimate the excellency of your character, or in any possible way contribute to your happiness. When I reflect on the fortitude and sensibility you displayed at the time of Mr. Harcourt's death, and that for three following years, during that period of life when gaiety is natural to every heart, you

were devoted only to the sick-room of a languishing mother, whose life you protracted nearly by the expence of your own—when I remember, that with a body weakened by long suffering and solicitude, and a mind absorbed equally by affliction and habit in one inestimable object, you yet resigned that object, at the call of Heaven, with a piety as sincere as your. grief; when I remember, too, that since that awful period, you have submitted, notwithstanding the independence both of your fortune and your character, to residing with your aunt, whose temper was as iraseible as your mother's was meek, and whose immense fortune can never repay you for the torments of a single month, endured by you with unalterable sweetness, I cannot, oh! I cannot think, Griselda, of such a being, so formed for admiration, so perfected by suffering, so calculated for the constant exercise of every gentle affection and every milder virtue, becoming the wife of a dissipated gamester, a libertine,

or, at best, an idle man of fashion!" A burst of tears followed this impassionate address, and spoke more forcibly than any language to the heart of Griselda, who, when she perceived her friend a little more composed, and had somewhat recovered her own serenity, resumed the conversation thus.

"I beg you will go on with the account you were giving me of sir Edward's conduct; for though I dread to hear of his folly, yet it is a task I ought to impose upon myself; to be determinately blind in a case of so much importance, is worse than madness."

Mrs. Barnet, encouraged by this appearance of candour, in a friend whose welfare was so dear to her, proceeded to inform Griselda, that on sir Edward Langdale's utter disappointment of his hopes, he flew to London, and entered at once into the dissipation it enabled him to pursue, with an avidity no parental remonstrance could check, nor any subsequent event subdue;

for although on the death of his father he had appeared, for a short time, very deeply affected, yet as soon as he began to arrange his affairs, and take possession of his title and fortune, he reassumed his old pursuits, was again surrounded with thoughtless and profligate; and this career of folly was only now interrupted by the derangement of his affairs, which required a wealthy marriage; and such a one was now presented, in the person of his first flame, whose aunt had, three months before, left her the richest heiress in his neighbourhood, and who was allowed to be one of the finest women in the kingdom. That sir Edward should seek an union with Griselda, Mrs. Barnet very justly concluded was very natural to a man so situated, without including in that desire any intention to reform his manners, or any affection for his intended wife, which could give reasonable hopes of such reformation; but that Griselda, whose habits were entirely those of domestic life, whose principles

were strictly religious, and whose passions were all under the apparent controul of her reason—that she could think of encourageing such a union, appeared to the mind of Mrs. Barnet an infatuation alike unaccountable and deplorable.

Griselda, in answer to the information thus given, could reply only, "that she was afraid, indeed, that sir Edward had been very dissipated;" but observed, that minds under the influence of passion were easily led into many errors, from their eagerness to get rid of any pain which was of a nature to increase itself by reflection; that the gaming-table, by offering an object that occupied the whole mind, and employed all the faculties, was, at such a period, peculiarly calculated to seduce young men of ardent minds; but that she apprehended any man, who was not led to this vice by avarice, or impelled to it by the habit of wasting time he had not the talent to employ better, might be reformed by the kind counsels of a wife he esteemed,

or the increasing claims of a family he loved.

Mrs. Barnet shook her head in unbelief: but seeing that Griselda was about making further defence, she said, "Well, well, I grant the man is not covetous; and, certainly, he is not deficient in abilities; so. it is possible, as you say, that he may be reformed; but how can you, Griselda, justify, or even at all palliate, his character as a man of gallantry?—is it consistent with the pure system of morality in which you were educated, and the pious precepts of that mother whose memory you so highly honour, to form so sacred a connection with a man whose conduct, in this respect, is governed only by his passions, and whose habits of associating with loose and unprincipled women, must have totally unfitted him for appreciating the excellence of purer manners, or complying with the dictates of virtuous fidelity? Oh, Griselda!" she exclaimed, with the most impassioned tenderness, "I boped to see you united to

some

some good man, who would have cherished your virtues, while he loved your person; one who would have joined in every planof benevolence your generous heart adopted, while his improving judgment gave force to the object, and stability to the power of munificence. I did flatter myself, that notwithstanding the general proneness to dissipation in men of rank, yet some one would step forth, of congenial virtues, with whom you, my long-loved friend, might have forgot the sorrows of your youth, enjoyed with prudence your acquisition of fortune, and, while you communicated happiness to all around you, have gone hand-in-hand to heaven. oh! my dear Griselda," she exclaimed, with new and overwhelming emotion, "if you marry a dissipated man, whose errors are confirmed by habit, whose passions are strengthened by indulgence, this happiness you can never, never know. If, indeed, you were madly in love with him, for a short time your fondness might render

you blind to his errors; but the mask, even in this case, would be soon torn from your eyes, and leave you to feel the extent of that wretchedness every woman, of religious principles and virtuous habits, must be sensible of, who finds that she has united her fate to a worthless, unprincipled man; but you have not before you even the little dream of felicity which passion would present; your mind is too well attempered to allow the residence of such a headstrong guest. From the first month of your marriage, you will be condemned to see, and feel, the difficulties—I may say the horrors, of your situation. Pardon me if I distress you; love less than mine would shrink from the task of tearing a heart like yours; but the voice of friendship is imperious; it calls on me for honest and indefatigable exertion-and I cannot temporize."

The warmth and affection of this address, given by one whose excellent heart and sound understanding had long been known, and dearly prized by Griselda, affected her exceedingly;

exceedingly; she saw that her friend was solicitous to snatch her from a situation which she herself felt to be that of a precipice; but it was one she had so fully considered, that her resolution was taken; and though it was possible to render her wretched by painting anew those evils which her own judgment had often depicted, yet it was no longer possible to wean her from the system of action her mind had adopted. She felt it, however, a duty she owed to the disinterested ingenuousness of Mrs. Barnet, and still more toher own character, hitherto remarkable for consistency, to offer some reason for a deviation, in so momentous a concern, from that conduct which her friends and the world had a right to expect from her: as soon, therefore, as she was able to restore her mind to some degree of composure, she thus addressed her still weeping friend:

"Every objection you have urged, and many more that you would urge, if you were able to speak, have, from time to time, time, presented themselves to my mind, my dear friend, and have been weighed by me with all the seriousness due to their awful importance: I mention this, in the first place, to show you that I am not, by any means, led to form this awful contract by impetuosity or thoughtlessness; and, having premised this, I entreat you earnestly to listen to the motives which have actuated me, and which, though they may not appear sufficiently satisfactory to you, will, I trust, tend, in a great measure, to reconcile you to an inevitable evil."

"Inevitable! did you say, Griselda?"

"I do say inevitable; and I add, evil likewise, by way of shewing you, that, like yourself, I am aware that a state of trial, or, if you prefer the term, of sorrow, is before me; but I call upon your justice tolisten to my defence.

"When sir Edward Langdale first attached himself to me, he was an amiable young man, whose mind gave promise of every virtue we could reasonably expect in one who had laboured under such errors of education as he had; for you must allow, that his father's unlimited indulgence, and perpetual praise, were sufficient to nurse in his mind an equal propensity to pride and passion, which were, at that time, the only failings to which he appeared liable in the eyes of my parents: you see I do not mention my own, for in them, I confess, at that time, he had not a single fault."

"Such feelings, towards so pleasant a man, were natural at that time of day, Griselda; and I am well aware you suffered much in renouncing him, to oblige your father," said Mrs. Barnet; "but pray proceed."

"When torn by a parent, who had, till then, indulged every wish he had formed, from one to whom he was, at that time, most fervently attached, can you be surprised that a mind, naturally impetuous, and ever unrestrained, should burst the bounds of prudence, whose lessons were

never

never taught, save in the single instance, where injustice made resistance appear meritorious? The transition from dissipation to vice is perceptible only in its effects; for its gradations with men are too easy to excite alarm; and he who places pleasure at the helm, has already, though perhaps unconsciously, consigned virtue to the waves. When man, whether driven by sorrow, or allured by joy, once embarks, in quest of consolation or delight, on the current of sensuality, he becomes a fallen being, equally liable to deceive and be deceived; finding refuge from the vexation occasioned by one passion in the promises of another, he flies from folly to folly, from vice to vice. Surrounded by those whose volatility prevents them from thinking at all, or the wicked, who think only for themselves, he too becomes selfish. in his pursuits, and careless of their consequences: covetous of pleasure, he squanders fortune in the pursuit, and is profuse in proportion as he is contracted; his heart

grows

grows cold and hard; for it is neither warmed by friendship, nor melted by compassion, beyond the impression of the moment; and even that impression its perverted faculties seeks to lose, by any means, however blamable, because such feelings are in him connected with reflection he would avoid, and remorse he endeavours to despise."

"Forgive my interruption," exclaimed Mrs. Barnet, "but my astonishment increases with every word you utter. picture of a man of the world goes far beyond my own, Griselda; for it enters not only into these errors of conduct which prove the impropriety of marrying such a one, but dives into that depravity of heart which is the result of habitual dissipation, and the effectual barrier against reform. You cannot look on the being you have painted with the eye of love and approbation! You cannot think of uniting your fate with that of a man whom, it is true, you may pity, but whom you must despise!

despise!—speak, Griselda—make me happy!—tell me that my fears are false!"

"You are confounding my feelings, my dear," returned Griselda, "and therefore inferring a conclusion I have not warranted. You are right in concluding I do not view sir Edward with an eye of approbation, for, indeed, his conduct has my decided blame; but it is equally true, that the tender regard I have long nourished for him, though it is not precisely the passion it was seven years ago, may certainly be denominated love. In the second place, you say I may pity, but I must despise him: to this I answer, he has, indeed, my sincerest pity; for I apprehend sin to be so truly the source of sorrow, that it has a claim on my compassion, wherever it may be found, but especially in one whose errors were, in a great measure, caused, though innocently, by myself and my parents. But your conclusion, that I must despise him, is as false as the former, that I could not love him. Sir Edward, with all

his faults, is not so deep in the world's dark dye as to be an object of contempt to me, or I could not love him. Many women have loved those whom they were obliged to condemn; but none ever pretended to love that which she despised. There are many gradations in esteem; and affection will be often found compatible with a small portion of it, when hope promises that increase of virtue which must inevitably produce more."

"Hope is a flatterer all who love are ever ready to listen to; and I perceive what Mr. Barnet says is true, after all, that woman, when most amiable, and even when most wise, is still an inconsistent being: little did I think I should ever be brought to acknowledge it; and still less that I should find the example in her whom I have quoted a thousand times, as a proof of what woman might be: but it is of no use, I see, talking; you have, I presume, adopted the old proverb, that a reformed

vol. i. c rake

rake is the best husband, and are determined to abide by the doctrine."

" Indeed you wrong me very much; for I consider the belief of such doctrine as ntterly inconsistent with that purity which should distinguish the female mind; and truly to be envied is that woman who finds in her partner no remnant of a guilty stain; no hours annoyed by bitter recollection; no memory of scenes which he cannot confide to her ear, or circumstances which, however sorrowful, her tenderness must never be called upon to sooth or to participate. But surely, Mrs. Barnet, there are some circumstances which occasionally occur to an individual, which, if they do not fully justify her for marrying a man whose conduct merits her disapprobation, yet greatly pathate the folly—I may say guilt, of such a connexion; and under those circumstances I apprehend I now stand. I have examined my hopes of sir Edward's reformation, and I consider them well founded."

"I am curious to hear them—pray proceed."

" My first is so decidedly my principal one, that I had almost hoped you would have foreseen it: it arises from this circumstance:-Notwithstanding sir Edward has mixed so much with the gay world, and what in the present day is still worse, the philosophizing world, he has never been induced to adopt the fashionable scepticism by which the judgment is perverted, the heart hardened, and, to use the expressive language of holy writ, "the conscience seared as with a hot iron." The believer in revelation always retains a vulnerable part open to the claims of truth and sensibility; and though he may shut his ears to the voice of Religion, yet so long as he acknowledges her existence, he does not exclude himself from the benefit of her rebukes; with such a one, the time of repentance may come, though late; for the door is open to all, save those whose impious pride or vain reasonings have shut

surely lay hold as a sure refuge, not only for my husband but myself. With a sceptic, even if he were a decent liver, I durst not join myself in so near an union, for I should fear that he would infect me with his doubts; but with a Christian, though a very imperfect one, I think I have some rational grounds of expecting eventual good, from the hope of one day seeing him partake, in all its extent of virtue and of blessedness, my own invaluable faith."

Mrs. Barnet shook her head.

"I may have much to endure," said Griselda, "before such a change takes place; for bad habits and strong passions are not easily subdued: but, with such an object in view, I shall be able to 'endure all things, and hope all things.' You have sometimes," said Griselda, with a pensive smile, "wished me to have a little more ambition; my dear friend, I am now shewing you all my heart, and you will perceive that, notwithstanding its apparent meek-

ness and humility, it has been nourishing ambition of the highest kind—the ambition of restoring my husband to his own esteem, and that of all good men; of giving him the power to benefit society by his virtues, far more than he has injured it by his vices: nay, more," she added, while her countenance assumed an expression of mingled tenderness and dignity, and hereyes beamed with angelic sweetness, "nay more, my friend, I aspire at tasting even heavenly joys on earth, and grasping at eternal honours; for 'is there not joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth?' and are we not told, that f they who turn: many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever?"

"You are so amiable and good, Griselda, even in your errors," said Mrs. Barnet, "that it is difficult to believe they are such; in fact, no enthusiasm can have a more worthy object, certainly, than the reformation of a man of acknowledged talents, and whose situation in life might en-

able him to do much good: but, alas! my dear, it rarely happens that wives possess much influence over gay husbands; when a man gives his wife but little of his company, even that little will be curtailed, if he is incommoded by reflections ill suited to his taste, and gravity that reproves his manners. I am glad to hear there is any thing good left in sir Edward, however, and beg you will tell me what else inspires you with the hopes of being able to live tolerably with him?"

"He has a spirit that despises all the meaner vices; he is strictly honest; and he scorns a lie."

"I believe that is very true, Griselda; but he is so very expensive, that not even your fortune will bear out his extravagance; he is capricious, passionate, and self-willed."

"Perhaps he may have become so," said Griselda; "but this temper is not natural to him, and in time he will correct himself: at any rate, you will allow, that if there is a woman

a woman whose circumstances permit her to devote herself exclusively to the attainment of the great object in question, I am that woman. If I suffer, I shall have, at least, the melancholy satisfaction of suffering alone; for those who would have shared in my grief are laid in the dust. I have so long suffered from the petulance of my poor aunt's temper, that I have learned to endure with patience, what I feel with sensibility. My fortune is large enough to claim my husband's gratitude, and a part of it so settled as to elude his prodigality, and supply all my own necessities, which are few, except what I owe my fellow-creatures. As I have never admitted any lover but sir Edward, I am entitled to his esteem for my constancy, and I hope to preserve it by my conduct; and as I can have no doubt but I was once fondly loved by him, so I have a right to conclude that I am, or shall become again, the object of his pure affections; and a good husband cannot be a bad man. I trust you will

see me in the situation you have so often heard my revered mother describe, as, in her opinion, the happiest a woman could enjoy—the wife of a country gentleman, surrounded by dependants she valued, and society she esteemed; constituting the happiness of a husband she loved, and a family she delighted in."

"Never, never!" exclaimed Mrs. Barnet, with emphasis; "I may see you a saint in heaven, but I shall never see you blest on earth: you are a victim, a self-immolated victim, and I shall see you from month to month, and year to year, drag on a life of lingering torture, till some stroke, more violent, though not more cruel, than the past, releases you from suffering." As she spoke these words, she burst into a new agony of tears, and Griselda, trembling at the vaticination she had uttered, yet clinging fearfully to the tottering fabric of happiness she had drawn for future life, sat down and wept beside her.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

It has been the fashion, time immemorial, for all writers of tales and adventures, however nominated, to conclude their history with the marriage of the hero or heroine whose misfortunes they have related, or whose feelings they have described, save only in those of Griseldas', who appear to be a race of beings whose memoirs are taken up at the momentous period where those of other young ladies are laid down: but though novelists have in general considered a woman's history concluded when she becomes a wife, yet wives themselves generally know that the most interesting period of their lives, in fact, commenced c 5 with

with that epoch; and that, although is might be the conclusion of great anxiety, of various perilous adventures, and many serious sorrows, yet was the beginning of new cares and perpetual solicitude, not felt the less sensibly for being blended with tenderness that endears, and delicacy that refines them. A poet, who thoroughly understood the human heart, has said, with much truth, that the most congenial minds, in a matrimonial union, will find in each other, every day, "something to pity, something to condemn;" and as it is the peculiar duty of woman in this state to forbear and to obey, as her happiness is, or ought to be, derived from the very being whom she cannot always approve, yet must never cease to respect, we apprehend that a woman of sensibility and reflection, who adds to her virtue faith, and to her love knowledge, will have many anxieties respecting her "bosom's lord," which are not found in the general catalogue of a lover's lover's fears, though they appertain to that character, in its highest sense, when felt by an affectionate and conscientious wife.

To return to Griselda, whom we left with a friend who tenderly loved her, and for whom she felt the sincerest regard, but who, finding that neither intreaties nor remonstrances could induce her to forego a marriage which had been concluded on some time before, at length ceased to trouble her, save by an occasional sigh of regret she could not suppress, and an air of sorrow it was impossible to conceal. and which was so far contagious, that Griselda appeared to suffer a degree of anxiety and depression of spirits, far beyond the general solicitude which must pervade the mind of every thinking woman on the eveof so important an event. She passed: much of her time alone, and seldom reappeared without traces of recent agitation in her countenance; she had the air of a person about to bid adieu to happiness, rather than welcome its approach; and of

one who was bracing her mind to meet with fortitude some awful and impending trial; and though her manners lost nothing of their accustomed gentleness, the effect of incessant thought was visible in every thing she said or did; the smiles of fortune, and the play of fancy, sunk before the severity of that discipline to which she appeared subjecting herself; and Mrs. Barnet bitterly lamented that she had placed the errors of sir Edward Langdale in so strong a point of view, as to render his affianced wife the object of her own condemnation, for a preference she was alike unable to conquer or defend.

But whatever were those secret pangs and trembling forebodings, known only to herself and to that Heavenly Father before whose mercy-seat her tears and prayers had long flowed incessantly, previous to her marriage, it was very evident that, after that event had really taken place, the general cheerfulness and happy equanimity of Griselda's mind returned, and that there

there was no period of her life in which she had appeared more amiable or engaging. The desire of communicating happiness to all around her was so interwoven, both from nature and principle, with every feeling of her heart and every action of her life, that it might be rather said to be her existence, than to constitute a part of it; and the prevalent idea, that she was now giving joy to the being long so dear to her, appeared to reanimate her with spirits more vivid, from their late depression, and powers more vigorous, from their recent subjection.

In the bustle attendant on a splendid wedding in the country, there is a confusion which leaves little room for observation on the development of those finer traits of character which, perhaps, constitute more of the happiness or misery of life than even those decisive ones which influence the good or bad conduct of those in whom we are interested. Thus the three first weeks of Griselda's married life passed over,

happiness is estimated by the multitude; but without any circumstance calculated to alarm the vigilant eye of friendship, or the more awakened suspicion of love; and Mrs. Barnet began to feel her fears subside, while our heroine herself was confirmed in those hopes which had supported her under all the discouragements her friend had pointed out, and her own judgment confirmed.

At the end of this period, major and Mrs. Barnet, with two other visitants, took leave of the bride, and a short cessation of the business of receiving large parties took place at the Grove: the former circumstance was very painful to lady Langdale, on a double account, for she not only parted from a friend, to whom she was sincerely attached, but from a gentleman with whom she wished her husband to form a dear and close connexion; and though she well knew that major Barnet's sentiments respecting sir Edward were inimical to her views.

views, and that it was with some difficulty his amiable lady had prevailed on him to be one of her wedding party, yet, with the true spirit of a woman in love, she flattered herself that the major could not live three weeks in the house with a man so agreeable in his manners and superior in his talents as sir Edward Langdale, without feeling a strong predilection in his favour: and although this has been a conclusion made by. young ladies under similar circumstances, time immemorial, yet we must pay the tribute due to Griselda's judgment, as well as affection, in this case, by allowing that the major, with whatever opinion he might enter the mansion of sir Edward, left it with a favourable impression of the master, and a decisive hope that he would eventually regain the path of virtue, led by the hand of such an angel as his wife; but he knew the human heart too well, he had seen too much of that world, which had long been sir Edward's only atmosphere, to flatter himself with any sudden conversion; and when

Mrs. Barnet had wiped her eyes, and begunto felicitate herself on the prospect of her dear Griselda's happiness, he could not help shaking his head, and saying—"We will hope for the best, Maria; but all is yet uncertain; while sir Edward remains in the country, all will be well; but I tremble for the ensuing winter: let me not damp your spirits, however, by my surmises; for I assure you I like sir Edward much better than I expected, and I hope our dear friend will, at some future period, find him worthy the hand she has honoured him with."

While the major was thus conversing with his long-loved Maria, as they drove through the park, Griselda and her heart-elected lord stood on the spot from whence they had parted, apparently engaged in the same occupation—that of watching their friends' departure; but their minds were very differently employed: Griselda's heart was busied with various emotions, all indicative of her character—"My dear friend has left me, it is true," said she, internally,

" and

"and I am sensible of her loss; but she is gone, with a husband she loves, to the child she idolizes; and she leaves me to the enjoyment of the same delightful affections, and the exercise of still more extensive duties than her own. I must now visit my poor, whom I have necessarily neglected: I must ride over to the Elms; all the servants there will be impatient to see me: I must write to good Mr. Berkeley some account of my marriage; and I must speak to the housekeeper to procure more linen for the children to be making before winter."

"What can I possibly do, now the major is gone and Mordaunt too?" ejaculated sir Edward, as he saw the curricle of the latter make the last turning within view: "how the devil shall I drag on the time for the next two months?—To be sure, shooting-time will come in before then, and the races too! I wonder why sir William could not have come to-day as well as Friday; I would have had a match with him: the ma-

jor ought to have staid this week out; he has not used me well."

This soliloquy was interrupted by Griselda, with a request that sir Edward would ride over with her to the Elms, the name of her own house in the neighbourhood.

"If I ride at all, ma'am, to-day, it will be on horseback."

"That is precisely what I wish," said Griselda; "for I could not ride in that way while Mrs. Barnet was with me, because she preferred a carriage, and I wish much for my accustomed exercise."

"I am not inclined to ride in any way to-day, lady Langdale; I think the weather too hot, and I have letters to write."

Griselda was a little hurt, and the tears,, which had sprung to her eyes as she kissed her friend, would have returned unbidden, but she twinkled them away, and said, with great sweetness, as she turned towards the house—" I can go any other morning just as well, my dear."

Sir Edward made no reply, but walked off

off towards the stables, while Griselda, rallying her spirits, stepped into the house-keeper's room: at the door she met a servant, who had been begging Mrs. Nicholson, the housekeeper, to pin a white ribbon in his hat; and, with that insignia of joy in his hand, he now proceeded to make his best bow to his lady, and beg, "az how she would be zo good az to ax his honour for leave to go to his zister's wedding."

Tom, the present pleader, was the son of one of sir Edward's poor tenants, and had been taken, very young, to wait upon sir Edward; and being a sharp lad, and understanding a horse well, had the honour of still being employed by his master as a groom, though his personal services had been long ago dispensed with, to Tom's great mortification, as he thought himself quite as well calculated for a walley as his successor; "becaze it stands to razon," said Tom, "that a man who can do any thing about a horse, can do any thing about a gentleman, and much more properer too."

This

This reasoning, however excellent, did not prove serviceable to Tom in the way he intended it; for he was obliged to resign all personal attendance on his master, and confine himself to the stable, where, however, he had the satisfaction of reigning sole lord, notwithstanding the great increase and value of his master's stud, which had led many of the knowing fraternity of jockeys to express great surprise that sir Edward should retain such a low fellow for his. groom. Tom's contempt, both for the superior talents of the walley de sham, and of his brother grooms, had a very happy effect on his own character: after nine year's service to a man of fashion, Tom remained incorruptibly honest, and obstinately sincere; he had been known to-Griselda some years before, when he was. the sole attendant of the young squire, and she had recognised him, with pleasure, among those who greeted her arrival at: the Grove: his request put to flight every painful sensation which had touched hermind.

mind, not pressed it, on coming into the house, and she instantly replied—"She was certain sir Edward would grant his request with great pleasure;" adding, in a tone of kind inquiry, "but who has your sister married, Tom?—I am surprised that I did not hear of it before; I must see her myself by-and-by."

"Zhe be married to Dick Martin, the miller, my leady, as good a lad az ony in Glouztershire, for matter o'that. Dick wanted zhe to be wed a year back, but zhe put it off till I com'd; zeeing as feather be dead, zhe looks up to me az twer; zo I wrut her a bit on a letter to stop till I com'd; and when I com'd, zeeing we were zo buzy-like, and your leadyship boun to wed, and all that, I put it off till to-day; and then, az t'company were going, I geed my consent; and, with his honour's leave, we mean to have a merry day ath' mill, and a bit of a daunce towards night, if you'll be so good as to ax he?"

As this appeared so very trifling a favour,

that there could be no occasion for her personal interposition, lady Langdale would have sent Tom after his master to the stables himself, but recollecting that sir Edward was not in the very best of humours, she led the way herself thither, followed by Tom, to whom she said—" Has your master never heard of this wedding before, Tom?"

"No, my leady, I never mentions my affairs to he, nor zhuld I ha bin zo bold now, if your leadyship hadn't axid me; an, besides, I knows, an all the country knows, that it was always the way with his honour Harcourt, an madam, an yourzelf, an all, for matter o'that, to think about poor folks, just zeame az other Chriztans, and help 'em wi ther weddins and burrins; but it isn't the way wi sir Edward mich, though he's very good where he taks, and his mother were as koind as a prince to every body; but toimes are changed, my leady, that's all."

Tom's testimony to the worth of her parents rents affected Griselda, and made her eager to reward him for his simple praise.—Seeing sir Edward advancing to the house, she sprung forward, and without noticing the indolent gloom which seemed to hang upon him, instantly preferred Tom's request, that he might attend the wedding of his sister.

"I cannot spare him to-day," said the baronet, with an air of apathy, that fell like ice on the benevolent breast of his petitioner.

"I ask your pardon," said Griselda, colouring, "but I understood you were not going to ride to-day, and I ven——"

"I do not know that I shall ride to-day, lady Langdale, but I choose that Tom shall be about the place, and my will, I apprehend, is sufficient in such a case."

Griselda took hold of sir Edward's arm, and whispered, in the most conciliating voice and manner imaginable, the particulars of the case, as Tom had given them to her, intreating him to consider how bitter the disappointment would be, not only to himself, but all the party at the mill; "and you know," added she, smiling, "my dear Edward, you and I have been too lately made happy ourselves to cast a damp upon a wedding."

It was a most unfortunate allusion, for. sir Edward had fallen into a train of thought, which led him to consider that the ennui he fell into at the major's departure was owing to his marriage; and, without taking the trouble to investigate the cause, or even to recollect that he had felt the same sensation a thousand times before he was married, he concluded that he was that morning fated to feel the beginning of those matrimonial discomforts of which he had heard much, and seen a good deal, in his intercourse with fashionable couples, who married without love, lived together without esteem, and parted without regret. On this fancied morning of initiation, he determined to act as became one who had much to sustain, when the best was made of

it, and, therefore, in the most peremptory tone, told Griselda, "he desired she would not interfere with his servants;" and, at the same time, called out to Tom, in an authoritative voice, that he expected him to return immediately to his duty.

"Duty, your honour! I zhuld be glad to know whenever Ise waz off my duty—trust Tom Hopkins for that; but if I ben't to go to zister's wedding, I zay its dammed hard, so I do, ater weating zo long."

"Insolent scoundrel!" exclaimed sir Edward, in a rage which terrified Griselda: she motioned with her hand for Tom to fly, but Tom could not obey her; he felt himself in quite as great a passion as his master, and, in his own opinion at least, with somewhat more reason; his own services, ill repaid, rose on his mind, contrasted with those of the "scoundrel train," whom he had seen caressed and rewarded profusely; but in the midst of this host of mutinous thoughts, Tom recollected that he never could cringe and stoop, as he had

seen others do, and this defect in himself he justly concluded was an equivalent for all his faithful services; and he therefore checked the torrent of self-justification that was rising to his tongue: but to move was impossible; silence was the utmost limit of Tom's philosophy; but, happily, this sufficed, as his master, after repeating his orders with a tremendous oath, stalked majestically into the house, drawing the library-door after him with such a tremendous clap, as effectually to forbid all intrusion on his privacy.

Griselda retired to her dressing-room, her thoughts confused, and her heart agitated: she, however, soon regained composure; she recollected that her task was only begun, not altered; that the momentous period was arrived which she had always expected, in which the proof of her love and forbearance, her powers of long-suffering and patience, must be tried; and though she found that it is much easier in theory than practice, "to hope all things, and endure

all thing," yet she was sensible of a power, at least in cases like this, to "overcome evil with good."

The baronet, on his part, saw the folly, and even cruelty, of refusing poor Tom's modest request, before he had been in the house five minutes; but accustomed to think only of himself, the sense of doing wrong could scarcely be said to awaken sorrow for its commission; and the little that did obtrude was entirely placed to the account of his lady's intrusion, whom he chose to think to blame, because wives, he had always understood, were officious and intermeddling; and though the meek manners and deprecating eye of Griselda, as she rose to recollection at the moment he shook her from his arm, contradicted the assertions of pride and ill-humour, yet sir Edward continued to listen to them. "Either," said he, "she will carry it off with a high hand, and give a lecture on passion and inhumanity, or else she will sit weeping and silent, like 'Patience on a

D 2 monument:

monument: this is, I fancy, the more general and efficacious way with women of her description; and, certainly, a man would rather be wheedled than stormed into any thing; not that I choose to be either; the lady's tears and arguments will, I apprehend, have equal avail.—Well," added he; rising and stretching himself, not indolently but exultingly, "after all, she is a fine woman, and has a devilish fine fortune."

A pang shot across sir Edward's heart as he uttered the last words—" Was it then for her fortune he had married the faithful, the generous Griselda?" and he was obliged to have recourse to all his arguments against whining, scolding, fainting wives, before he could dare to recollect any thing respecting Griselda's fortune and its destination.

It was a most unlucky thing, that the first day in which any thing had occurred to disturb the domestic harmony at the Grove, should be the day on which its master and mistress were doomed to a tête-à-tête dinner;

but

but sir Edward had the satisfaction of feeling that the ennui, which he found so oppressive in the morning, had entirely left
him, and that in the various plans he had
been forming for resisting the encroachments of his wife, and providing against the
horrors of her society, the morning had
passed with such celerity, that dressing-time
had entirely escaped him, and dinner was
announced before he had arranged his plan
of action.

no battle to fight; the open, pleasant countenance of Griselda, and the first tones of her voice, when she asked him to take soup, proved that she had no intention to renew one unpleasant remembrance in either his mind or her own; and though she looked rather pale, there were no traces of tears on her face, or any expression which could, by the most ingenious misinterpretation, be construed into complaint or expostulation; and sir Edward, being freed from all expectations of acidi-

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ty in his matrimonial cup, had nothing to fear but its insipidity: as these things were passing in his mind, he said little; but his silence, having nothing forbidding in it, Griselda gave him the history of a walk she had taken in the neighbouring village, and commented on the appearance of the country, and the state of its agriculture, observing that there was part of a common which she thought might be inclosed to advantage.

Sir Edward, conscious that many parts of his estate wanted the eye of a master, and that a small portion of that money he had lost on the turf or at the gaming-table, might have been creditably and profitably employed in agricultural improvements, did not immediately reply; and Griselda, who read his thoughts, and whose love augmented her delicacy, sought to relieve him by inquiring "what he had been reading?"

"I read little," said sir Edward, "though I sat long; I took up 'Spencer's Fairy' Queen,' Queen,' indeed, because it lay on the table. Why do you smile?"

"I thought you would know that book, Edward; it has lain on the table now many years."

"I did not remark it—Why, is that the same book I gave you when we were first acquainted?"

"Indeed it is, my love; and I will not now blush to confess, that it has been the companion of my solitary hours ever since; it has witnessed many a silent sigh, and many a hopeless tear; and I ought to be ashamed of having forsaken such a good old friend, in the manner I have done for the last month; but you must make my apology."

Though Griselda said she would not blush for this avowal, yet she certainly did, for a more lovely carnation, the genuine off-spring of modest sensibility and exquisite tenderness, never bloomed on the cheek of any human being. Sir Edward was struck, nay, charmed; a new and delightful emotion warmed his heart and filled his eyes.

Griselda had extended her hand towards him as she spoke, and he seized it with avidity, and pressed it to his lips, and, in a voice that faltered with agitation, exclaimed—"Ah! my love, while you were closeted with your silent friend, the memento of our early loves, how very, very differently was I employed! alas! Griselda, over this lapse of time, on which you retrace the sorrows of a tender heart, I have to mourn over the far keener woes of a reproaching conscience.—Leave me, Griselda—leave me, my love—you see how I am disordered!"

But Griselda ventured to disobey, and throwing the hand he had relinquished round his neck, she strained him closely to her heart, while a prayer to Heaven for him murmured faintly on her lips: sir Edward tried to put her gently from him, and the accents, "No, no, I am unworthy! you do not know me, Griselda!" broke from him; but she would not be repulsed.

"We will weep and pray together, my Edward," said she.

Edward

pentance fell freely on the bosom of his wife.

From the effusions of pious sensibility, the soul arises purified and refreshed; and Griselda had not left her beloved partner more than half-an-hour, when he appeared at her dressing-room-door, and proposed, as the evening was very fine, that they should ride over to the Elms: Griselda actepted the invitation with grateful pleasure, and rung the bell instantly to order the horses. The footman who answered inquired if he should attend them, as Hopkins, unluckily, was not able?

- What is the matter?" said sir Edward, with some alarm.
- drunk, sir."
- "Tis well it is no worse," said sir Edward: "but where is he?"
- "Asleep in the stable, your honour, and has been some hours."
- he mounted. Tom had just risen, and was throwing:

throwing his jacket over his shoulders instead of his coat, which he had taken off; he looked wistfully at his master, conscious of his fault, but yet with the air of one "more sinned against than sinning."

"Put on your coat again, Tom," said sir Edward, "and get the boy to saddle you the brown poney, for you must dance at the Mill to-night; look sharp, or your lady and me will be there before you. I am sorry I refused you this morning, but I was disturbed—you took me at a bad fime.

—I am not ignorant of your worth, Tom, depend upon it."

When Tom had shook himself, to be certain he was wide awake, he began to stammer an apology for his own impertinence; but, on sir Edward assuring him that all he had said was perfectly natural, Tom began fairly to blubber, and declared that he, and he only, had been to blame. From this friendly altercation sir Edward retired to ride to the Elms; and, as they returned, he conducted Griselda to the Mill, where she enjoyed

enjoyed that pleasure most congenial to her feelings. Tom had arrived there before them, and given all the party a new burst of joy; he was at this moment closeted with the bride and bridegroom; but, on learning who were at the door, the miller instantly made his appearance, accompanied by Tom, and followed by the bride, who, wiping her eves with the corner of her apron, and blushing to be seen by the quality, appeared to shrink from observation, till pulled forward by Tom, who attempted to apologize for her appearance, by saying, "-zhe was a little bashful loike, to be zure, but a very good vench, for aw that, in the main."

Encouraged by the condescending kindness of lady Langdale, and the happy countenance of her husband, Betty advanced,
and hoped her ladyship would excuse her
for seeming so flamagasted as it were; but
that really Tom had been so very kind to
her all his life, and had just now been so
special kind, that somehow she could not
D 6 help

help crying, but it was all for joy, she was certain.

"Why, Bet, I'm asheamed o'thee," said Tom, turning away in great confusion.

"Tis noa zhame," cried the miller, "however, for neither zhe nor I to tell your honour, and zo I wull, for once.— Look, an please you, sur Edward, at this purze; it has twenty good guineas in it, which Tom, this very minute, just az your honour came to the door, gave I, as he called it for a portion for Betty, tho' I be zure and zure, they that gets zhe needs wish for no more; besides, he az been always doing zummut for her ever zince her feather died—zo he as."

"He is a very worthy fellow, miller," said sir Edward, "and I am glad to find you have a proper sense of his kindness. As you are settled in the world, we must contrive to make some addition to your farm; we will talk of it to-morrow, if you will come to the Grove about ten o'clock."

With a low bow, the miller wished his honour

honour good-night, and they departed, amid the cheers of the company. Sir Edward was in excellent spirits all the way home, and descanted much on the beauty of the surrounding scenery, which, comprehending a lofty hill, cloathed with wood, a wide-spread valley, watered by the majestic Severn, now partially lighted by the setting sun, afforded ample scope for his eloquence; and Griselda observed, with delight, that the charms of nature held so much influence over his mind, justly concluding, that as the possession of a refined taste is one of the purest sources of human happiness, so the mind where it is nourished is one step nearer to virtue. inquired if sir Edward retained his old penchant for drawing, and heard, with a mixture of pain and pleasure, that he had abandoned it, from the time when they had ceased to pursue it together.

"But," said Griselda, eagerly, "we can draw together again;" to which sir Edward readily consented: in fact, such was the placid

placid contentment of his mind on this sweet evening, which might justly be called "the daughter of a rough and stormy sire," that he felt willing to consent to any thing that Griselda proposed: he was thoroughly convinced that his wife had no design to argue him into virtue, or sigh him into insignificance; and those being the only fears he could entertain of so excellent and so superior a woman as lady Langdale, he began to feel considerably easier in the matrimonial shackles, which, in the morning, had sat so heavily; and retired to rest, with the conviction that a man may occasionally spend a day in the country, even with no other company than his wife, in a very tolerable manner.

CHAP. III

The following morning, Griselda took care that sir Edward should not lose the power of renewing his drawing for want of the necessary implements, and the baronet had much pleasure in finding himself still possessed of power to dispose of time very delightfully, in an occupation which accorded with his taste, though so long a stranger to his pursuits. Griselda, on her part, was so much improved as to be a very good preceptress; and the intermediate days, till Friday, passed away very quickly, when the gentleman arrived, so much wished for by sir Edward, at the time of major Barnet's departure.

Sir William Elland was a distant relation of

of sir Edward Langdale's, but, at least, ten years his senior; being, however, a finelooking man, and in possession of a fine estate, though somewhat deeply mortgaged, and some great expectations, he was still permitted to consider himself a favourite with the ladies, of whom he had ever been too general an admirer to attach himself to any individual, though, for several years past, he had confined himself principally to his country-seat, and led that kind of life which was consistent with domestic attachments: and therefore it was no wonder that several ladies in his neighbourhood considered the handsome bachelor still worthy the regards of a pair of fine eyes, though he was no longer the "life of pleasure, and the soul of whim." In truth, sir William had lived in the gay world till he found it a grave one; for, having dissipated the hoards of a careful father and two good uncles, and encumbered his estate considerably, he found himself troubled with reflections which tended to throw a veil

over his pleasures and pursuits, which not only obscured their charms, but induced him to doubt whether they ever had possessed half so much as he had given them credit for; it was therefore not only necessity, but choice, which, in a great measure, influenced him, when he returned to the abode of his ancestors, and by selling part of his estate, and reducing his establishment, began to free himself from the importunity of creditors, and to inquire whether it were possible to lead the life of a country gentleman, without sinking into rusticity, or affecting oddity; and being fond of field sports, and finding his neighbourhood pretty sociable, he, by degrees, became insensibly attached to his situation, and would, most probably, have ere now cast his eye round the neighbourhood for a wife, whose fortune might have cleared his estate, and whose society have added to its agremens, if he had met in his circle of females one who appeared likely to make a man of his description happy; but sir William.

William, in this respect, was extremely fastidious, as many men who have mixed much in the world are found to be. had heard of the marriage of his relative with pleasure, because he thought it would remove the pecuniary embarrassments of his estate; and having lately formed a passion for landed property, he had a sympathy for those who were likely to lose it. Besides, the character of lady Langdale was such as claimed even his decided approba- ... tion; added to this, he loved a fine horse now better than he had loved a fine woman at any time; and as sir Edward possessed several of great celebrity at this time, he determined on paying him a visit.

Griselda was much pleased with the manners of sir William Elland, and was thought by him so very amiable, that he seized the first moment they were alone together to congratulate sir Edward, in the warmest terms, on the beauty and accomplishments of his bride, declaring that if it had been his lot to have met with such a woman.

woman, he would long ago have commenced a benedict: he then entered into a frank review of his past life, which he condemned in a very conclusive manner; from thence, adverted to his present circumstances; and, after a very confidential disclosure of them, adverted to those of his hearer, and inquired after Griselda's steward, who, he said, had the character of being not only a very faithful one to her late great-aunts, whom he might have cheated with impunity, but that he was likewise considered a thorough agriculturist, and a complete man of business?

' ' I believe he is all this," said sir Edward, confusedly; "I have seen nothing of him, but I must get my own man of business to talk to him soon; I have no inclination to listen to his prosing myself, and I want a pretty round sum for my present occasions; and when Griselda goes to town, I suppose, like other women, she will choose to make her debût in style, though I cannot

say I have much to fear from her extravagance."

- "Has she any idea of your present embarrassments?"
- "None at all, I apprehend; for though I concluded that the country rung with my excesses, and deplored my extravagance, yet, conceiving that I had abundant resources, I made the offer of so handsome a settlement, that I fear she concluded such reports, if they reached her, false; and that, though I might be out of ready cash, yet that I was by no means encumbered with debts."
- "She accepted your offer of course, and therefore—"
- "Quite the contrary; she saw my attorney herself, and told him, that as one estate of hers, though a very inconsiderable one, was inalienably settled upon her, she did not wish for any other; and when, a few days before our marriage, I again pressed the subject, she said, 'I do not know

know of any use in settlements, so long as married people live together; and as I hope we shall do so, pray say no more on the subject; and added, with a smile, 'if we should part, I shall shut myself up in my Yorkshire manor, and have more than enough for the wants of such a creature as a widow bewitched."

"Good God, what a woman!" cried sir William; "she is a paragon of generosity!"

"Yes, that is true; but this generosity of hers places me in a very awkward situation."

"The sooner you get out of it the better; suppose you pay me a visit, while your steward makes the necessary arrangements with hers; old square-toes will then have no opportunity of sighing over his accounts before his lady, and she will be saved the pain of hearing his lamentations: such a woman should be snatched from every pang; and it will be as great an act of mercy to her as you, to clear the path for her debût."

This offer was instantly accepted; and

it was further agreed, that sir William should invite a maiden lady, who was cousin to the mothers of both these gentlemen, to do the honours of his mansion during their stay; from this lady they had both expectations, on the score of relationship; but sir William conceived his to be far better founded, as he had kept up some shew of respect for her; but sir Edward had not seen her from his infancy, and he could not help concluding that the visit would be a most terrible bore; but being just now more pressed for money than he had been in the whole course of his life before. and feeling a degree of delicacy towards his wife which he had not suspected in himself, he readily acquiesced in sir William's proposal; and the moment it was mentioned to Griselda, she concurred in it with her usual sweetness, expressing a great desire to become acquainted with lady Elizabeth Osborne.

The following morning sir William retired to write to this lady; and sir Edward remaining remaining to read a number of letters, which the servant had just brought from the post, Griselda took her knotting, and continued in the breakfast-parlour.

As sir Edward closed the last letter, he breathed a sigh of vexation, at the same time he threw nearly the whole of the packet into the fire.

"Your correspondents are more numerous than pleasant this morning, my dear," said Griselda.

"That is the case with every ones correspondents, at times, I apprehend," said sir Edward; rather peevishly adding, "every one of those letters ought to have been addressed to Mr. Benson, my steward."

"But perhaps," said Griselda, with a bewitching playfulness, "your correspondents are like me, they prefer an intercourse with principals. As you appear to have no inclination to talk with good old Allen, my steward in days past, you will forgive me for a trick I have played him."

"I don't

"I don't understand, you, lady Lang-dale."

"How can you expect to understand a woman in a month?—and this very day our honeymoon expires; let not this, however, be the last drop of honey you permit me to have the pleasure of tasting with you: in this pocket-book you will find fifteen thousand pounds, my love, which will, I hope, relieve you from any present difficulty; in about six weeks, Allen will pay you ten thousand more; and as the rents of the Elms estate will be collected about the same time, I hope you will be made perfectly easy."

Sir Edward coloured, and attempted to speak; though happy to be relieved from his pecuniary difficulties, a confused idea that Griselda must have overheard his conversation with his friend, prevented him from receiving pleasure at the moment. Griselda however relieved him alike from his suspicion and confusion, by observing that

that she had been with Allen the previous evening, at the time he had been sitting with sir William; and by treating his circumstances as a thing so familiar to her mind, that there appeared nothing to praise in her, or blame in himself, thus reconciling the revoltings of pride, and awakening the claims of affection, she not only restored his mind to ease, but saw it enlivened with joy, and sensible of tenderness and gratitude; while an air of embarrassment was still visible in his fine features, as he inquired, "How she came to know that he was in want of cash, and whether Allen had been so officious?"

"My dear friend," said Griselda, "you must surely be aware, that though a man may spend his money as he pleases in London, and the matter may remain a secret among his most intimate acquaintance there, yet all his losses and miscarriages never fail to be brought down into the country, and retailed in every possible way; there was no need therefore of

Allen to mention your necessities to me; for until it was known positively that I was going to marry you, I heard of little else from those visitants who called upon me; nor did the affair ever pass Allen's lips, until he was obliged to speak of it in the way of business."

- " How ?".
- "Your attorney applied to him to borrow money, and offered a mortgage on this estate, not knowing, I apprehend, that you were about to encumber it with a wife."
- "What a singular blunder!—did you inform Allen that I was then making you overtures of a different nature?"
- "Not immediately, for, as you may suppose, I was somewhat struck with the circumstance. I lamented the necessity of your mortgaging this fine estate, hitherto untouched, and passed a pretty strong censure upon you; to which Allen gave a very qualified assent, saying, that, to be sure, you were much to blame; as

your mother's bequest was so handsome a sum, it ought to have lasted you till all your wild oats were sown; but he must say this, that you had more honesty and integrity about you, than any other man of honour and fashion he had heard of lately."

" Umph!" said the baronet, smiling.

"On inquiry, I found that, in the course of conversation, Mr. Benson had said there was in fact no occasion for you to mortgage now, for as you had, through the death of your father, become executor to the late Mr. Highcastle, you could, without the slightest inconvenience, accommodate yourself with twenty or thirty thousand pounds any day; but that you considered the office of guardian to his children of so sacred a nature, that no consideration whatever, he believed, would induce you to make the most temporary use of their money."

"A man of honour must be at a very low ebb in Allen's opinion, while he egg could could so highly estimate such a self-evident propriety as this," said sireEdward.

"The strict rectitude of Allen's principles does make him very intolerant in his morals, I confess," said Griselda; "but L am inclined to forgive it in him, being conscious that I am a positive bigot myself. Educated in principles of 'Justice to herself severe,' I have been taught not only to despise the dependence that is the neverfailing consequence of running in debt, but to feel likewise a consideration of what is due to my creditors, as one of my own duties: and 'tis not only necessary to my peace to know that I can pay my tradesmen, but that I shall pay with so much promptitude as to make my payment serviceable to them; this doctrine I imbibed from my very infancy, and practice having confirmed what theory began, you must excuse me if you find me ready to go to the stake in defence of my orthodoxy."

"With such principles, and with such knowledge,

knowledge, my dear Griselda," said sir Edward, mournfully, "you have bound yourself to the stake in marrying me, most of your friends will say; and I now perceive you thought so youself, for you often looked pale, and wore an air of extreme dejection, before we were married; I have no doubt you were anticipating flames and tortures then; confess—were you not afraid of me?"

"I have given you a pretty decisive proof how far my fears affected me; and I think you will allow, that, whatever might be either my fears or my dejection before my marriage, neither my sighs or my inquiries have been troublesome to you since."

"No, indeed! you have been all kindness; and this last instance, in saving me from any intercourse with Allen, who is a man I am forced to esteem, though I do not like, has made me sensible of your kindness to no common degree. I have the satisfaction of assuring you, that the money now in my hand will entirely pre-

serve the Grove from the pollution of pens, so much dreaded by old Allen, who, I dare say, would rather shed blood than ink upon it. I confess my property in other places has been drenched in this way pretty freely."

"We will find a way to wash out all these stains, my dear Edward; we have a large income now, and I shall be most happy to give up any thing you think necessary to set you perfectly at ease: the Yorkshire estate, though unalienable, may be somehow——"

"Admirable woman!" exclaimed sir Edward as he gazed on Griselda, "you would do any thing, give any thing, to a man whom you have been told a thousand times never would deserve you, and who most probably never will."

"Impossible!" said Griselda, "you de-

"As one proof, one little proof, that I comprehend the character I cannot reach," said sir Edward, "I now promise you, Griselda, and and you shall find, and the world shall find, that I can keep a promise—I now promise you, that whatever may be the extravagancies of my future life, your Elms shall be sacred; not a tree shall be felled, not a cottage shall be changed, not a rent shall be raised, though my last acre went to the hammer."

As sir Edward pronounced the last words, his cousin entered the room, and Griselda immediately lest it, being too much agitated, though very agreeably so, to join in conversation. Sir William, who had seen Griselda wipe her eyes as she passed him, and had heard sir Edward's voice above iss usual pitch, had some suspicion that an altercation was taking place, but was soonagreeably undeceived by the baronet's information; and as sir William was really a good-natured man, he entered with warmthinto the feelings of his friend on this occasion, and observed, that it was impossible to help loving such a woman as lady Langdale to distraction:

To this sir Edward replied, "I was distractedly fond of her seven years ago."

- "Aye, and will be seven years to come," said sir William,
- "Perhaps I may, there is no knowing," replied the husband, with great sang froid.
- "I certainly do not know so lovely a woman any where, take her altogether."
- "Nor I," rejoined sir Edward, "as you say, take her altogether."
- "Yours has been a very romantic love affair, Ned, with Griselda."
- "Griselda's has been a very romantic love affair with me, you mean."
 - " Is not that the same thing?"
- "I am afraid not, sir William; my heart, or my conscience, or whatever you call it, tells me it is not precisely the same thing."

 Here the conversation ended, but the last words made a deep impression on sir William; he began to fear that Griselda had rather given a heart than exchanged one; and that his conclusion, drawn from appearances,

pearances, that sir Edward's love for his lady was the cause of his reformation, or would be so, had been rather premature; he found that the supposition that a woman worthy of love must be beloved, cannot always be relied on; he recollected too the many times in which sir Edward had been engaged in love affairs, since his first passion for Miss Harcourt, and, judging of his heart by his own, he feared that its strongest energies and finest feelings were destroyed; and that Griselda, all excellent as she was, failed to awaken a heart frozen by satiety, or desirous to repose in apathy those passions so long excited to delirium.

The tendency of these thoughts was evidently to change Griselda from an object of admiration to one of pity. Sir William had hitherto considered her in the light of an angel, crowned with roses of joy, and scattering flowers of pleasure in her path; he now considered her as an amiable woman, who is to be pitied; and she became, from that moment, more interesting than

E &

any horse in his stud, though, happily for himself, he had still some there who rivalled, if they could not equal, her pretensions.

In a short time, sir William having received a very gracious letter from lady Elizabeth, who expressed a great desire to become acquainted with lady Langdale, they set out for his house, the season for partridge-shooting having commenced, an amusement both gentlemen were anxious to enjoy. Sir Edward was in high spirits, being no longer teased with dunning letters nor unpleasant reflections; and his cara sposa felt in his smiles, not only the sense. of present, but the earnest of future felicity; in every circumstance which tended to open the powers of his mind, she felt herself confirmed in the belief, that whenever he should be withdrawn from frivolous or unworthy pursuits, he would become all that she could conceive of excellence; and she flattered herself this time would arrive very soon, if it were not already

ready come. Conscious that the impetuosity of his temper and the activity of his mind required him to be perpetually engaged, she did not regret his predilection for field sports, though her own gentle spirit led her to be "the guardian, not the tyrant of the field;" yet, conscious that the temperature of man leads him to a different sense of things, she affected an interest in his success, and omitted no means of rendering every thing connected with country pleasures agreeable to him: but many causes must combine, ere the palate, vitiated by high sauces, can return to simple viands; and of this truth Griselda, contrary to the belief of most new-married: ladies, happily for herself and her husband, entertained a very proper sense.

Sir William's seat was in the neighbourhood of Worcester, and partook much of the beauty of scenery for which that fine city is remarkable; it was on the banks of the Severn, which presented a moving

B 6. picture.

picture, that gave great gaiety to the scene. The grounds near the house were all highly cultivated; and the large orchards, now bending under their precious load, still gave an appearance of plenty, though the honours of Ceres had departed, which was highly grateful. Sir Edward asked Griselda, as her eye busily glanced from one object to another, as they drew up to the house, what she admired the most, of all that attracted her attention, in the house or the grounds about it?

- "I like the tout ensemble," said Griselda, "for it says, 'My master lives at home."
- "True," said sir Edward, coldly; "but he has not lived at home all his life, remember."
- "True," answeredshe, with great gaiety; "nordoes he live now as a man ought in the country, for he has no wife. Some dozen years hence, when you and I shall settle at the Grove, my dear, I hope our sobriety, as lady Grace calls it, will be much more productive

ductive of rural felicity; but, in the mean time, I mean to dash a little, you must know."

"I am glad to hear it," said the husband, gaily.

They now entered the house, and were met in the hall by lady Elizabeth Osborne, whose appearance, though not remarkably prepossessing, had nothing of that repellant nature usually, though often falsely, attributed to maiden ladies who have attained their fiftieth year: she was of rather a sickly complexion, but her features were fine and regular; she was tall, and very upright; and her address was that, technically designated, of a gentlewoman of the old school; and as Griselda was not a gentlewoman of the new school, and had nearly passed her whole life with those who were decidedly of the former, she saw nothing in the manners of lady Elizabeth, which did not perfectly accord with her own ideas of propriety and comfort, and, of course.

course, soon became at ease with her new acquaintance, a circumstance sir William saw with pleasure, though it militated against his hopes of being her ladyship's cole heir.

CHAP. IV.

The following morning, as lady Elizabeth was presiding at the breakfast-table, and had just received the morning salutation of the gentlemen, Griselda having not yet made her appearance, a fine young creature burst into the room, and, throwing her hat on the table, exclaimed—"So, Bill, you're got home again, I find: give us your fist, my old one; I'm glad to see thee, faith—got a devilish crow to pull wi' thee too, my boy."

Lady

Lady Elizabeth happened to have a large silver tea-urn between herself and the speaker, and as she saw only the upper part of the lady's dress, which was a habit, and her hat taken off a crop head, she concluded the speaker was some young gentleman, who, according to modern usage, had been rather too much with his father's groom; but desirous to show every attention to sir William's guest, she immediately begged he would introduce her to the genetleman.

"D'ye hear that, Nance?" said the baronet, laughing; "here's my aunt took you for a gentleman!"

"That's a good one, madam; thanke for that—I'll owe you one—couldn't ha pleased me better—never liked petticoats in my life—marks o' slavery, vile custom: but what's the woman's name, Bill?" and, in an audible whisper, "who the devil's that handsome man?"

"Lady Elizabeth Osborne," said sir William, "allow me to introduce to you

the honourable Miss Anne Holcroft, the youngest daughter of lady Holcroft, an old and valuable acquaintance of yours.—Miss Anne, permit me to introduce to you sir Edward Langdale."

At this moment lady Langdale entered the room, and the young lady, putting her glass to her eye, exclaimed—" And this, I suppose, is sir Edward's sister—very like him, pon my honour, and devilish handsome too!"

Lady Elizabeth drew up her head to the extremest possibility, which sir William observing, said, in his usual address to this young lady—" Nance, you ought not to take the devil's name in vain so often before ladies; you quite shock my cousin, and lady Langdale has not been used to that kind of thing, and won't like it, I assure you."

"Lady Langdale! why is she your wife then?—bless my life, I recollect now Bill went to see a bride, but as he didn't talk of bringing her back, it never struck me: and who the devil would have thought of your being married? there's nothing about you like a marrying man," said the young lady, staring at sir Edward with amazing effrontery.

Lady Elizabeth could contain her disgust no longer—"I have heard much," said she, turning to lady Langdale, "of the great change in female manners since I was in the world, but, I must confess, I was by no means prepared for it, especially in the daughter of a lady, who, in her younger years, was a pattern of all the milder graces."

"An old maid, I perceive; don't you smoke her?" said the pretty hoyden to sir Edward, with the frankness of an old acquaintance; but not meeting the encouragement she expected from his eye, she applied her glass to the examination of lady Elizabeth's person, and, after a rude investigation, said—"You're quizzing me, I find; we'll be even, depend on't, by-and-bye; if you talk of my mother's mildness, I can comfort you by assuring; she has

and we girls roast her finely, as you may suppose: but she's the upper hand now all to nothing. Do you know," added she, turning to sir William, "we've got an old parson and his quiz of a daughter, from Yorkshire, come to stay a month with us—dreadful bore, isn't it? Now you've these women in your house, you may as well ask Ehza and me to come and stay with you: in fact, I will never forgive you for your neglect of Miss Trimmer, as long as I live; 'twas quite inhuman to leave the country without inquiring how her leg was going on. If you don't do as I wish you—"

Sir William, evidently puzzled with the request, did not immediately reply; and lady Langdale, to relieve him, asked Miss Holcroft "if her friend, Miss Trimmer, had met with an accident?" to which the young lady replied, after a horse-laugh—"Yes, a terrible accident in the fetlock; and that brute, sir Bill, after sending his farrier, thought no more of the matter, but

set out for the Grove, without taking any further notice, though all the world knew, that when his sir Solomon had a sitfast, I came every day of my life to see the dear fellow myself."

"Which dear fellow?" said sir Edward.

The young lady's face betrayed a slight blush, which luckily caught the eye of lady Elizabeth, and as she thought it a sign of grace, she condescended to address the speaker once more, by inquiring "if the clergyman and his daughter, who were such terrible bores, were near the end of their visit?"

"Oh no! not half over yet; there they are fixed, like rock-work, for a fortnight to come, or may-be more; for my mother will have it, the old one's better for change of air; so God knows when we shall be rid of 'em.'

"Has the gentleman been ill?" said Griselda, with instinctive humanity.

"Not downright ill; but its a particular thing, sure enough; he has lost three sons, one after another, in this war, all fine lads—wife died soon after second went down—old boy sadly grieved then—now tother's blown up; and so, altogether bothered him terribly: nobody left now but the girl, and she's white as a sheet.—Mother saw this in the paper—wrote to the old fellow to come to us a bit—hadn't seen him six-and-twenty years!—strangely altered, she says—always like, you know—had a many children, a small living, and all that."

"Considering the brevity of your narration, Anne," said sir William, "it has produced great effects," adverting to the tears shed by the ladies; and it is no wonder, for circumstances, so singularly affecting, must be felt, in whatever form they are presented; but you have not told us the parson's name yet."

"Oh, 'tis Slingsby; he's a man of family, I fancy, but quite poor; they call his daughter Louisa; the wench has fine eyes, and plays well, but she's a poor creature—

no shult at all—good for nothing but to sing psalms, mend stockings, and rock the cradle; past her best days too—take it she's seven-and-twenty—might ha' been married, and well, mother says, more than once, but wouldn't leave her daddy—there's a hum!"

At the beginning of this speech, lady Elizabeth had left the room, apparently unwell, but not wishing to be noticed: sir William therefore observed, though such an instance of affection to a parent was certainly singular, yet the lady who had just left them was a proof that it was not impossible, as she had dedicated herself to her mother, and for her sake refused many unexceptionable offers:" he added, "lady Elizabeth had a sister, who was married extremely young to a very old man, and, after his death, made:a very imprudent match, so that, in both her marriages, there was much unhappiness; and there was in the union of her own parents still more to lament, for her father treated her

her mother, who was both a beautiful and amiable woman, with singular unkindness and disrespect: with such examples of matrimonial infelicity in her own family, added to the consciousness of being her mother's only comfort, it was no wonder that she adopted the line of life in which we find her: but mark, Nance," said he, resuming his playful manner, "I won't have her called old maid, nor quizzed, nor bored, nor any thing else that is unpleasant to her; and, if you'll promise to be very good, I'll ride over to-day, and ask your mother to allow me to bring Eliza back."

Miss Anne promised, by various knowing nods, that she would let the old maid live in peace. Sir Edward said he should have great pleasure in accompanying sir William, as he wished much to pay his respects to Mr. Slingsby; on which the young lady observed that she would accompany them, as she wanted to show Miss Trimmer's foot to sir Edward; and they departed together.

Lady

Lady Langdale, finding that lady Elizabeth had been so much affected by the sorrows of Mr. Slingsby as to produce a nervous complaint, to which she was very subject, took a walk in the grounds, which detained her so long, that she had scarcely time to dress for dinner, whither she was summoned to meet a large party of the neighbouring gentry, and, among the rest, lady Holcroft, her eldest daughter, and her guests, Mr. and Miss Slingsby, who, with perhaps more zeal than wisdom, sir William had pressed into his party, being desirous of introducing to lady Langdale two people whom he was persuaded had minds congenial to her own.

Lady Elizabeth had not yet left her room, but as Griselda knew it was her intention to join the party at dinner, she stepped into her dressing-room, to inform her of the pleasant addition that was made to it by lady Holcroft's arrival: on hearing this, lady Elizabeth became still more pale, and declared herself unable to meet so

large

Jarge a party, though she wished much to see lady Holcroft in the course of the day. Griselda entreated her to take every possible care of herself, with that tenderness which was habitual in her, but which affected lady Elizabeth in the most sensible manner; and the warm pressure of her burning hand assured Griselda that she had a heart formed for the exercise of the most benevolent affections.

Lady Holcrost appeared mild and amiable, a perfect contrast to the boisterous manners of her younger daughter, and the absent coldness which at present enveloped the eldest, who was a genteel person, with a sensible though haughty countenance; she lamented much the indisposition of her old friend, lady Elizabeth, as did Mr. Slingsby, who said, he once had the honour of knowing her ladyship, but it was so many years ago, she had probably forgot him. Lady Langdale lamented that in so large a party, her situation at the head of the table did not allow her to devote

more of her time to this interesting man and his daughter, whose manners and appearance were singularly prepossessing. When the indisposition of lady Elizabeth was mentioned, as they entered the diningroom, Miss Anne bawled out to sir William—"So the old maid's ill, I find; quiz me if that isn't a good one; I'd be bound to kill her by a hoax any day, and that'll be a good job for you, sir Billy:—what will you give me for such a service, hey?—We'd have a glorious burying, wouldn't we, hey?"

"In such a case," said Mr. Hilton, a volunteer officer, "you should command all the military honours I could bring forward; as without them, I apprehend, no funeral could properly be called glorious, and I should be happy to give the lady, I mean sir William, a feu de jote on the occasion."

It was seldom that the attempered spirit of Griselda rose above the boundaries of patience, but this gross indelicacy, both towards six William, as she took it, and the vol. 1. Slingsbys,

Slingsbys, roused her indignation, and, with a glance of penetrating anger, she told the gentleman "he had better keep his firing for a more worthy occasion, if he had ever the honour of finding such, since she was convinced, whenever lady Elizabeth died, her grave would be moistened by the tears of her heirs, an honour she could not promise to even youth and beauty, when unallied to those virtues which characterize female worth."

"How very handsome Griselda looks!" said sir Edward, internally; "I did not think she had had so much spirit; she has relieved me from the trouble I must have taken with that coxcomb, and I am glad of it, for 'twas not worth while."

The conversation soon turned on politics, in which two ladies took a share; but Griselda was content to be a listener; and it must be allowed she was a very happy one, for the reading and thinking displayed on this exhaustless subject by six Edward delighted her; and she enjoyed the highest

highest gratification a wife's ambition ever knows, that of witnessing homage paid to her chosen lord; and she hoped the time would yet come, when the tribute to his virtues would be rendered still more frankly than that which was now offered to his superior talents.

When the ladies had withdrawn, lady Holcroft spent half-an-hour in lady Elizabeth's dressing-room. The company separated at an early hour, and the two Miss Holcrofts remained at sir William's.

"'Tis a singular arrangement," said lady Holcroft, with a sigh; "but if I did not let the girls stay, they would take their revenge on poor Miss Slingsby, I know; so 'tis better to submit, for her sake: these are strange times, lady Langdale; every girl now is wiser than her mother: I hope, if you have any daughters, they will change again, that you may know those comforts which I trust I have bestowed, though I have never tasted—those of duty and obedience."

After the company was gone, sir Wildiam, addressing Miss Holcroft, said, "I know, Eliza, that, generally speaking, you are so much wiser than your neighbours, that you seldom converse with them, but to day you have been unusually silent; what has been the matter with you?"

"I was baffled in an experiment I was making this morning on the comparative weight of oxygen gas, and it put me so much out of humour, I could not regain my spirits, though I inhaled a bladder of pure hydrogen for that purpose."

"A pint of port would have answered better," said her sister; "when I am a cup too low, I take that with my lunch, just the same as I put gin in my mare's mash, and it sets us both to rights again." Then, turning suddenly to sir Edward, "I'll make a match with you; my mare is the best in these parts; let us see what sort of blood you have brought among us; remember we will each ride our own."

"I am not used to riding against ladies; but

but what do you say to engaging lady: Langdale?—what do you say, my dear? will you accept a challenge? I know few ladies who ride so well as you do."

"But I cannot ride on this occasion, my dear, unless it were in obedience to your command; I think no less binding expression of your will could induce me to do any thing so unpleasant."

"There! you see she won't; you must take to me at last.—But, at any rate; if you won't ride against me, you shall ride with me; I will show you all the lions of this neighbourhood, I'm determined."

"We intend that, of course," said sir William. "What say ye to visiting Hagley to-morrow, lady Langdale? allow me to conduct you to the tomb of Lucy."

"That's right, conduct her to the tomb, and then I'll set my cap at her husband," said Anne, laughing as she laid hold of sir Edward's arm; adding, "you see how honest I am."

"You are an arrant madcap," oried sire

William; "I wish Eliza could put you in a crucible, and boil you over again."

"Boil me! don't mention it; she has been boiling two puppies and an old turkey-cock these three days; and nothing can be more likely than that she should have a passion for anatomizing me, for she cast the eye of desire on my foot, as I got a thorn out yesterday morning, and observed that it was a piece of very curious mechanism: she has killed two dogs, seven rabbits, and above a dozen mice, within the last month, and there's no saying where she may stop."

Lady Langdale observed, "that Miss Holcroft must be aware that her experiments tended to some beneficial end, or she would not be able to prevail on herself to make the loss of life a means of attaining knowledge."

"Scientific investigation," said the young lady, haughtily, "ought not to be shackled by vulgar weakness, or retarded by puerile prejudices; I dare say you are

of my opinion in this respect, sir Edward Langdale, and conceive that our sex has too long been the slave of both?"

"I am so devoted to your sex," said sir Edward, smiling, "that I know not whether I admire them more when, enveloped in their ancient costume of prejudices, they are fine by defect, and amiably weak," or when they have the courage to rise above the trammels of custom, and give new proofs of power unheard of till the present æra."

"The powers of woman are, indeed, only developing in the present day," said Eliza, with great gravity; "and what improvements they may make in chemistry, anatomy, and physiology, there is no saying. Pray, lady Elizabeth, have you seen Gall's last Treatise on Craniology?"

The lady answered in the negative.

"Perhaps you have no taste that way; you probably know nothing of anatomy?"

"A very short work on essification, read while

while I nursed my poor mother through a broken arm, is the extent of my knowledge, I confess," said lady Elizabeth; "though I admire and highly approve it as a study for gentlemen, whether in the profession or not, the absolute impossibility of a lady studying it to any advantage, has kept me from ever thinking further on the subject, than as it was connected with my religious feelings."

"A connexion as unnatural as matrimony, madam, and as little likely to benefit society: religion is the prejudice of a weak mind, (lady Elizabeth bowed), and scientific research the occupation of a strong one," replied the young lady, with surprising dignity.

Sir Edward was exceedingly amused; but he could not help repeating, from Young—

"That decisive air,

Fully convinces all the world she's fair."

"Of my ignorance," said lady Elizabeth, in

in a tone of most humorous humility, "I am deeply sensible; but as it is allowed; by a great poet, that

Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise,'.

I content myself with my lot, especially as: it is shared, in this respect at *least*, in common with all my sex; for though we have many modern philosophers and politicians in petticoats, yet I have not heard of any lady brandishing a dissecting-knife, or examining a dead subject."

"Then, my dear cousin," said sir William, "I, who live out of the world, can assure you that your ignorance is a greater bliss than you are aware of, as I can give you a proof:—At the last spring assizes at Derby, there was a young fellow executed for murder, and of course given for dissection; the day after, the surgeon requested an artist who was in the town to take a drawing for him of something particular about the breast or shoulder; for this purpose the body was laid on a low table, and perfectly naked. The artist had

not been long engaged, when some person tapped at the door, and on the man who attended opening it, a lady, accompanied by two elegant girls, stepped in, and addressing the artist, said, "they were come to examine the body."

The painter, though not subject to mauvaise honte, and accustomed, in the course of his own studies, to similar examinations, was yet so surprised as to step between the ladies and the body, and stammer out something of its not being in a situation to be seen; but one of the ladies pushing past him, convinced him of his error, by laying her hand upon the thigh, with the most perfect nonchalance, and observing that the flesh was very firm; at this moment I entered, having some business with the artist in question; my surprise was equal to his: and we retired to adjust our affair, leaving the ladies at leisure to examine, and, for ought I know, to dissect the body *."

"One of those young ladies was my

^{*} A fact,

friend; she accompanied Mrs. doctor F—, who is a proficient in anatomy," said Eliza, without noticing the upraised eyes of lady Elizabeth, the blushes of Griselda, or the disgust of sir Edward.

"Now I am satisfied," said lady Elizabeth, "but, till the young lady spoke, I really thought you were hoaxing me, William; after this, I shall certainly be for ever cured of the vulgar passion of surprise, especially on the subject of sensible men remaining bachelors."

The company now parted for the night. The day following was spent, with several succeeding ones, in visiting Hagley, the Leasowes, Dudley Castle, and other beauties of Worcestershire and Staffordshire. During these excursions, Miss Anne Hologroft was the never-failing attendant of sir Edward Langdale, for whose sake she laid down, in a great measure, the coarse manners she had assumed, which lady Langdale observed with pleasure, not supposing that it was possible a young lady could be

paying court to a married man, and concluding that the alteration was adopted rather in compliment to her own feelings than those of her husband, who had appeared for some time equally amused by the eccentricities of both sisters; but, after a time, was so completely way-laid by Anne, that he was obliged to listen to her stable details, and renounce the laboratory of her less noisy sister. In the course of these conversations, Anne informed him, with great apparent frankness, that she should have no objection to becoming lady Elland, notwithstanding the difference between sir William's age and her own; for her fortune was but small; and though she managed her mother pretty well, yet the poor soul was such a quiz, and had such antiquated notions of things, that she was desirous of becoming a wife, that she might have a little more of her own way.

Sir Edward inquired "if sir William had ever paid his court to her in any way?"

[&]quot;I can't say he ever did," answered the young

young lady, "except in general civilities; but as he is so fond of horses, and so am I, you know, I thought we must come together, on Eliza's principle of assimilation and attraction, and all that; and so I think we should, if you hadn't spoiled him at the Grove."

"Spoiled him at the Grove! I don't understand you."

"Oh! don't you? then you're blinder than old Jolly, my mother's coach-horse, and he hasn't seen these five years: why, he was as hearty a fellow as ever followed a foxhound, drank his bottle as freely, and swore a round stick as honestly, and now he's quite metamorphosed into a jack-a-dandy milksop: at first I thought it was old madam Stiffrump that made him so pretty behaved, while she stayed at his house, because he's likely to have her cash, I suppose; but I now see there's another wench in the wind; sir Billy's a deep one; lady Langdale's blue eyes haven't looked so lovingly on him for nothing."

Sir Edward fell into a profound reverie, which the young lady, like Iago, suffered to work its own way, but had the mortification to see no effects produced beyond the time, as the evening was spent in the utmost hilarity: the day following, being the last of their perambulation, she paid still more attention to sir Edward; and having piqued her sister by a pointed interruption of one of her ignorant definitions, which she mistook for a learned one, that young lady revenged herself, by asking lady Langdale bluntly "if she loved sir Edward?"

Griselda laughed, and said, "It was avery home question truly, but it was so generally understood that wives had some tenderness for their husbands, that she'believed she might venture to give an affirmative answer."

"Marriage being in itself," said Eliza,
"an odious, unnatural, and indelicate institution, can seldom occur between people
of sensibility, and therefore, I apprehend,
your

your ladyship's observation, in the first place, is very ill founded; for wives, even when they possess the warmest emotions of the heart, seldom extend them to their husbands, and the affirmative you have given in your own case is self-evidently false."

"Good God! Eliza," cried sir William, "how can you speak to lady Langdale in this manner?"

"Truth is immutable, sir William, and I am only the oracle of its dictates, when I declare that if lady Langdale did indeed love sir Edward, she must necessarily and inevitably be jealous of Miss Anne Holcroft, whose conduct, though justifiable perhaps on the principles of irresistible impulses, is utterly inconsistent with the present organization of society, and the happiness of the individual in question, were that individual indeed a lover."

Lady Langdale smiled, and was about to reply, but a deadly paleness overspread her countenance, and she suddenly withdrew; neither of the ladies offering to follow her, sir William said, "I am certain lady Langdale is ill," in a tone of evident perturbation; adding, "had you not better follow her, sir Edward?—or you, Eliza?"

"Lord, what a fuss!" exclaimed Anne; "don't go yet; I want to tie your cravat, Ned—'tis quite a figure! I suppose your wife's breeding, man, that's all; and Eliza has a mind to try experiments—see here she comes again. I hope you're better?" said she with a nod; "don't be jealous, though I am tying your hubby's cravat; I tell him you're breeding, that's all: never mind what Lizzy says; she's only amalgamating your feelings in a new crucible, that's all."

The crimson blush that succeeded the pallid hue of Griselda's face formed a contrast to the cool effrontery of the young lady, that must find its way to the heart of any man. Sir William, to relieve her, immediately left the room; and sir Edward, in a tone of unusual tenderness, desired she would

would sit down, saying, he feared they had travelled too much for her lately. Griselda immediately took a chair, saying she had been much amused, but should not be sorry to be settled again; though she would not have made the observation, she said, in sir William's presence, as he had exerted himself to the utmost to make their jaunt not only pleasurable but easy.

"Yes, he has been very attentive to you, truly," said sir Edward, relapsing into indifference.

At this moment, the fine eyes of Griselda, raised towards that face on which she ever gazed with pleasure, encountered the countenance of Anne Holcroft, as reflected in a large mirror which hung behind sir Edward; the satisfaction it displayed, on hearing the altered tone of voice in which the last sentence was pronounced, assured her that more was meant than met the ear; and Eliza's words, joined to her own observations, which she had endeavoured, while they were only her own,

to disregard, struck full upon her heart, which throbbed violently; but forcing herself to speak, she said that she wished to return to the Grove, in two days at the farthest, if agreeable to sir Edward.

"To the Grove!" exclaimed Miss Anne, "impossible!—what the devil would you go to the Grove for?—Why, you're not jealous of me, surely?" said she, settling herself on sir Edward's knee; "I did not think you had been of such a disposition, I declare."

"I wish to go home because I am not very well, and because I know sir Edward has several engagements there, which he is now kindly putting off to give me pleasure; these are my motives, Miss Anne; for, indeed, I am not jealous of you; for, though I confess I have all the disposition in the world to be jealous, contrary to the opinion of both you and your sister, yet I can venture to assert, in the most serious manner, that at present I am perfectly free from that passion."

At this moment sir William entered, saying the carriages and horses were at the door, and inquiring if lady Langdale felt herself recovered? she answered she was perfectly well, except being a little light-headed, and that she could wish sir Edward to drive her in sir William's curricle, if he would be kind enough to ride on horseback with Miss Anne. To this the baronet acceded, with evident pleasure, for he wished to see sir Edward pay attention to his lady, and hoped this had been originally his proposal; as, however, he had not made it, Griselda stepped back, and gave a reason for her arrangement so flattering to him, that he gave from that moment his fears to the wind; and the day - passed more agreeably than any of the preceding ones to the whole party, not even excepting Miss Anne, whose serious designs being on sir William, notwithstanding her shameless flirtation with his cousin, was not sorry for an opportunity of rendering herself agreeable to him; but this attempt only

only succeeded so far as to impose upon herself a mode of imposition, to which designing ladies, from nineteen to ninety, are particularly subject.

They were received, on their return, with sincere pleasure, by lady Elizabeth, who had consoled herself, during their absence, by an almost constant intercourse with lady Holcroft, and her worthy visitants, of whom she spoke in such terms, that sir William said he would leave no means untried to induce Mr. Slingsby to spend some time with him before his return to Yorkshire; this occasioned sir Edward to mention Griselda's desire of a speedy departure to the Grove, a circumstance which was heard with great regret by lady Elizabeth, and so violently remonstrated against both by her and sir William, . that sir Edward declared he was quite willing to remain a week longer; but, on this occasion, Griselda displayed a perseverance unlike her general meekness, though couched in language so courteous, that

that it was not possible for any one to take offence. Sir Edward concluding that, not-withstanding her declaration to the contrary, jealousy had some share in her conduct, felt some self-complacency arise from the idea of being so fondly beloved, at the same time that he was perfectly cured of that shadow of the demon which had flitted over his own mind, and therefore willingly acquiesced with her wish for returning to the Grove.

The day following was spent at lady Holcroft's, where they again met many of the neighbouring gentry; among others, arrived two particular friends of Eliza Holcroft, and their mamma: the old lady entered the room, apparently in great flutter and distress; and having bustled up to lady Holcroft, said, she was glad she had got up to her old friend, who, having been as wicked as herself, would perhaps be able to say more for her conduct.

"Permit me to inquire, my dear Mrs.

James,

James, what you and I have been so wicked in?" said the lady.

"Why, dear me!" said the poor woman, in a terrible fidget, " my daughters have been assuring me that if I had not been exceedingly immodest, I never could have married their father: and they are so clever, and make so many speeches out of books, and talk so fast, that altogether there's no dealing with them; but I am sure you will be able to speak a word for me, lady Holcroft, for I am certain you can remember the day when Prudence Cecil was considered as modest a girl as any in the country; but, some how, all the things that I used to take for modesty are changed now-a-days; for they say that marrying is shockingly indelicate, and that going naked, as they do, is a proof of mental purity, as they call it. Lord bless me, what one does live to see!"

This was spoken in a low voice, and intended to be heard only by the ladies. A young

young married lady, who sat near, of a pretty slight figure, dressed in the height of the undressing mode, with a supercilious smile, observed, that it was surprising to her that the Misses James should not have discarded the Godwinean system; it was quite obsolete now, and had not been heard of among the circles of fashion for nearly two years; it went outlong before short waists, and the Grecian costume."

"Pray, madam, may I inquire," said Mr. Slingsby, "whether there is any determined period for the reign of a fashionable opinion? and how much longer a sentiment may last than a bonnet?"

Really, sir, I cannot say exactly; but I think a prevailing doctrine lasts generally from two to three years, allowing for the time it takes in descending to the lower brders, which is, in fact, much the same as a style in dress may be said to do; for though a particular cap, or boot, or bracelet, can only boast the reign of a month

or a season, yet the general style of dress, by which I mean the tout ensemble of a woman of fashion, does not undergo a complete revolution in less than two or sometimes three years."

"Then I have been in the country longer than I apprehended," said sir William; "for when I first settled here, you, Mrs. Spencer, were the greatest hunter in the country, and might be seen on horseback from morning to night; soon after, you promised to be an excellent shot, but was spoiled, all at once, in that way, by becoming a profound metaphysician; you then embraced politics, as a kindred study; and are now, I understand, become educationist extraordinaire."

"May I inquire, madam," said sir Edward, who had a strong taste for the ridiculous, "at what period, in this history of a mind whose endowments must be very rare, you consented to enlighten Mr. Spencer by an union with so much genius?" "It was, I recollect, sir, at the time when I dropped metaphysics, and was becoming a politician."

"That was what I apprehended; and, depend upon it, madam, the young ladies will, in due time, follow your excellent example: the most admirable casuists, and even the most scientific devotees, may exclaim, 'To this complexion we must come at last:' nor ought they to regret it, since a mind so sublime as yours has condescended to follow in the vulgar track."

Not aware of sir Edward's irony, Mrs. Spencer was charmed with being distinguished by so elegant a man, and persuaded that he could not fail to admire her person as much as he did her talents, began to exhibit herself in various attitudes; and lost no means of convincing him, that whatever might be the fashion of the day in her mind, that of her person was, in fact, the object of her care; which he observing, complimented her on the style of her head, and inquired how she had regulated her vol. 1.

dress during the different periods of opinion, which sir William had so accurately described?

"I was always classical, my good sir, as you will conclude when you know a little more of me; in the first place, I was dressed, of course, à la Diana; with the reign of metaphysics commenced the Greek drapery, the French nudity, and the general ease of latitudinarian phantasy. I was a very short time a politician, for the extreme slovenliness requisite was shockingly unbecoming; and, as the Egyptian costume was then obtaining, I adopted it, as you may perceive. The dress of a mummy is, in my opinion, fascinating in the extreme; but I look shockingly to-day! don't you think so?"

The question of course obtained the compliment it so plainly begged; and the lady, presenting her lily hand to the baronet, he led her, à la salle a manger, and seating himself by her side, seemed entirely, in the new-found eccentricity, to forget Miss

Miss Anne, a circumstance neither overlooked nor forgiven by that young lady, who, placing herself near lady Langdale, in a mild voice, and without one jockey allusion, began to lament the loss they must soon experience of her delightful society.

Lady Langdale made a cool reply to this compliment; and Miss Anne, soon after observing her eye glance towards sir Edward, said, in a whisper-" You cannot fail to be struck with the intolerable affectation of that woman, who is a compound of the most insufferable vanity and affectation; she is the daughter of a Birmingham toyman, who left her money enough t figure away in a style that introduced her to good company; and, when once established there, the chit had the impudence to talk of her family and her pretensions; but finding that too barefaced a lie. she aimed at fame by every means that women now-a-days adopt to gain notoriety; sir William has not enumerated half her efforts; the Misses James are her imitators; like her, they are deists, botanists, democrats, and attitudinarians; and I believe, Eliza turned skeleton-monger for the single purpose of being more outré than any of her neighbours."

"And Eliza's sister," said lady Langdale, with a smile, "became the assistant of her groom, for the same laudable purpose, I have a notion, hey?"

"Might have guessed worse," said Anne, with a stable nod; but continued in a whisper-"There is but one mode left in which Mrs. Spencer can excite attention now; having at one time been half dead by wearing damp petticoats to exhibit her shape, at another hardly saved from drowning to prove that she was a swimmer; she once broke her leg with scaling the walls of a castle to procure a lichen; and was once nearly suffocated by the fumes of nitrogene At one period, she declaimed against marriage, until she procured various insults of every description; and at another, positively asserted her intention of forming a matrimonial

matrimonial engagement, whenever she could meet with a congenial mind; but as such a one never appeared, about two years ago, she

'Stoop'd at once,

And made a hearty meal upon a dunce."

"I have not heard Mr. Spencer speak," answered lady Langdale, when the female censor took breath; "but he may not be foolish, though he is silent." 'Sir William mentioned the lady's present passion being that of an educationist, as he jestingly said, "Pray is she about to educate her husband?"

"Oh no, she knows better than that; if ever he takes learning, it must be by inoculation, depend upon it: no, her system of education is exerted on her little boy, now sixteen months old, who is a most untoward chit, and has repeatedly threatened to run away from his governess; first, when she laid his bosom bare that he might gain the hardihood of the Romans, the little rascal took an inflammation on the lungs; afterwards, when he was immersed in cold water, he went most provokingly into fits, be-

fore he had been an hour in the pond, nowithstanding his mother's assertion, 'that Indian mothers kept their woolly heads in the sea for a day together; and though various means have been tried to make his pronunciation a distinct one, yet he persists in bawling after his nurse by a most barbarous monosyllable, and in screaming at the sight of his mother as if she were a monster."

This description of cradle education was interrupted by Mrs. Spencer calling out to her husband, who was at the other end of the table—"Mr. Spencer, my love, I infreat you to use all your powers with lady Langdale to prevail on her to remain in this country a little longer; I must positively see her and the baronet at Luna Place; we must give them a little attic entertainment there, my love."

"I have no objection, Mrs. Spencer," replied the husband, "to your giving a little natty entertainment any day; but I must say that I don't want to see no more hurly-burlys at my house; call it what you please, though Lundy Hall, being the true name, always pleases me the best, I must say that, once for all."

Having once spoken, Mr. Spencer resumed the business of eating, in a manner so serious and effective, as to preclude further application to him on any subject that required an answer; but his lady obligingly made up the deficiency, by exclaiming-" Bless my life, my dear Mr. Spencer, how can you be such a Goth as to prefer Lundy Hall to Luna Place, especially when you know, and all the world knows, that your plantations are all demi-crescentic or semi-lunar, and that it is impossible to approach the house without seeing the horns spring on each side of you? for this reason I dedicate the place to Luna, goddess of the silver bow: do not you, sir Edward, see the happy approximation of my ideas in this elegant appellative?"

Sir Edward confessed that the horns, and the moon, and the fair speaker, were admirably approximated; but observing an ill-suppressed titter arising among some of the company, inquired what Mr. Spencer had intended to convey by naming a hurlyburly entertainment?

"Oh! 'twas the most charming idea, quite classical, I assure you !-You must know, I wished to give an amusement, that should at once fascinate the vulgar, and enchant the literati, so I contrived a fête à la Egyptienne, in which I represented Cleopatra, 'whose galley down the silver Cydnus rowed,' and equipped myself and boat most admirably for sailing on the milldam, in the neighbourhood of Luna Place, while Mr. Spencer, habited like Marc Antony, and attended by all our visitants, was to receive me, and conduct me to the Forum, deserted for my sake. In order to render my reception more striking, I had ordered a little pier, of an elegant but slight construction, to be built at the head of the dam, and here the company all crowded to witness my debarkation; when, most unfortunately, at the moment I rose from

from my throne, and was presenting to the Roman warrior that hand which cost the purchase of a world, the whole fabrication of the pier gave way, and precipitating itself upon my galley, involved us in one common ruin; all my loves and graces, with their queen, were soaked in the water, or floundering on the muddy banks; and the clothes that were spoiled, the colds that were caught, and the ancles that were sprained, formed the melancholy detail of a paragraph in the journals, instead of the triumphs of the Egyptian queen, and the splendour of her unrivalled entrée.—Now, don't you pity me, sir Edward?"

"Indeed I do not," said sir Edward, with great gallantry; "for no pity can be due to her who descended like Cleopatra, and rose like Venus from the waves."

This compliment, received with a most bewitching simper, drew the instant eye of Anne Holcroft—"There," said she to Griselda, "the syren has got all she sung for; all her Tyrian purple sails and her ostrich

plumage are paid for now, though they cost poor Spencer many a groan, as he paid the tradesmen for them: don't you see that I told you true? she is determined to monopolize notoriety, by finishing with a suit in Doctors' Commons; nay, don't look angry; it will not be her fault if she doesn't bring sir Edward there! look, now she leers at him; and what pains she is taking to exhibit her neck and her arms! I shan't be surprised if we have a fit before dinner is over yet."

"You are too severe a great deal, Miss Anne."

"And you are too easy, lady Langdale; I really think nothing in the world will make you jealous; and yet your security does not seem to spring from vanity; I really don't understand what it springs from; it cannot be indifference already."

"Indeed it is not either: you forget that confidence in one's husband supersedes the necessity of any other auxiliary; I flatter myself I have studied the character of mine

with

with some success, and I am persuaded, that when he gives me real cause for mistrust, it will be with a woman of a very different description to any who have hitherto endeavoured to attract him."

As lady Langdale spoke these words, so deep a crimson suffused the cheek of Miss Anne, that Griselda felt sorry that she had said so much: the ladies were now leaving table, and as the evening was not quite closed, a short walk was proposed, during which Griselda picked up a late cowslip, which she took great care of, and, on her return to the house, presented to lady Elizabeth, with a few lines of poetry, which she had wrote with a pencil on a scrap of paper.

Child of the spring, Hope's darling flower,
The boon of May's auspicious hour,
Who gemm'd thee with her pearliest dew,
And rob'd in morn's resplendent hue.
A stranger now, then lingerest here,
To drink October's chilling tear;
To dwell, an isolated thing,
And sigh o'er long-departed spring.

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But, gentle mourner, thou shalt know A truce to all thy tender woe, For I will lodge thee in a breast, Where every sufferer finds a rest.

Lady Elizabeth had just read the lines, and was thanking Griselda for the affectionate little offering, when the gentlemen joined them, and she immediately put them into Mr. Slingsby's hand, who observed that they had a merit which did not always accompany poetry, they were strictly true. Griselda, who had not for a moment supposed they would be seen by any eye except lady Elizabeth's, was a little hurt at this exposure, and begged they might be returned to her; but Mr. Slingsby had already put them into the hands of sir Edward, who, after looking at them with evident pleasure, on returning them to Mr. Slingsby, said—" It is somewhat singular that I was not aware that I had gained a painter till I had been married above a month; now another has passed, I find that I have got a poet likewise; what do you think think I shall be surprised with in lady Langdale next, Mr. Slingsby?"

"In truth, sir Edward, I can form no idea; for, in the present times, for a lady to 'yield her charms of mind with sweet delay,' is so extraordinary a circumstance, that nothing, after such an instance of singularity, ought to excite surprise; it is not improbable, however, she may astonish you some day with her proficiency in music."

"I believe I am acquainted with her powers in that way; they are sufficiently agreeable; her voice is remarkably harmonious."

"These are all delightful accomplishments in a companion for life," said Mr. Slingsby; "but, if I mistake not, you, sir Edward, have got still more essential requisites for happiness in lady Langdale; and when you have enjoyed the friendship of marriage for twenty years, you will find, I doubt not, 'how much the wife is dearer than the bride."

As the old gentleman uttered these words.

words, his voice faltered, and his eyes were filled with tears; the baronet was affected, and felt, for a moment, all the claims a virtuous union ought to have on his mind; but Mrs. Spencer, who could not imagine how he could be neglecting her so long, to talk in an under voice with that prosing old priest, now called loudly on his attention; having got the cowslip from its restingplace, she declared, very roundly, that it was utterly unworthy the lady's verses, or · the gentlemen's attention, being, she protested, an hermaphrodite flower, unable to propagate its species; to which Miss James, with amazing nonchalance, assented, adding, she wondered what such things were sent into the world for.

"They were not sent into the world," said her sister; "they came there by chance, as every thing else did."

"Oh! my love, don't say so!" exclaimed Mrs. Spencer; "atheism is going quite out; I have it from the best authority.—I am sure I am right—even deism is totter-

ing every day! Don't you think, sir Edward, one may venture to believe?"

"I think you may, madam, on the very best authority. Lady Elizabeth, allow me to take a seat by you; though it will likewise be near lady Langdale, we will make an old-fashioned trio."

At this moment Miss Anne Holcroft darted a look of trumph at Mrs. Spencer, who could not disguise the mortification she felt; and being unable to rally in any other way, she proposed going home, which partly answered her purpose, by breaking up the party: that part of them who returned to sir William's had the pleasure of taking back the good clergyman and his amiable daughter, who had agreed to become visitants to lady Elizabeth and the hospitable baronet, so long as the lady remained at his house.

CHAP. V.

THE following morning, sir Edward and lady Langdale took a kind leave of sir William and his good cousin, and returned to the Grove. Griselda was somewhat surprised to observe that her fellow-traveller was dull and low spirited; and though she had no reason to conclude, from any thing she had observed, that any person he left behind was the object of his regret, yet the apparent defection of his spirits gave her pain, which, however, she endeavoured not only to hide, but by every exertion in her power, she at length succeeded in engaging him in conversation, and had soon the pleasure of seeing his chagrin, if stupor can be so called, give way to that cheerful-

ness

ness which rendered him generally the idol of any company in which he chose to be agreeable.

Griselda herself possessed a delicate humour, and a large share of wit; she had a penetrating mind, and a quick perception of the ludicrous in any character: had she been a woman of less rigid principle, she must have been a keen satirist, and her bons mots and repartees would have been diamonds of the first lustre in the circles of wits and blue stockings: but so true a disciple was she of that school of charity, which "overcometh evil with good," that she never allowed herself to repeat a circumstance to the dishonour of any one, or to pass a censure on any conduct which came short of open depravity; but now she was alone with her husband, she chatted playfully on the characters they had met with, and placed their absurdities in so many whimsical points of view, that sir Edward was exceedingly amused, and declared he found himself at home, not only before

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fore he expected, but before he desired it; he told Griselda that he thought it singular that she had never exerted herself so much during their whole visit.

"I am fond of select parties, you know," said she; "and I have had to-day the circle which contains very near all I value in the world; it has comprised the judgment whose approbation I seek, the fancy I am desirous to amuse, and the heart I would win."

Sir Edward felt this appeal to his tenderness, and answered it as he ought. For some weeks after their arrival at the Grove, he was much engaged by country amusements and invitations from the neighbouring gentry; but he always returned home with pleasure, and sometimes regretted his engagements, sensible that he lost better society at home than any he met abroad; and that all which was estimable in himself was better appreciated by his wife than any other person; and that, in fact, Griselda was, of all others, most estimable

able as a companion, had she not unluckily been one he could resort to at any time.

In the mean time, sir William Elland had been seriously reflecting on the inestimable advantages of a lasting alliance with a virtuous woman, and the many good qualities of lady Langdale had taken such possession of his mind, that he was in danger of wearying all his acquaintance with the subject. Lady Elizabeth pointedly discouraged the subject, from a regard for his peace of mind, which she seriously apprehended might be injured by this alarming penchant. Miss Anne Holcroft, who frequently visited him, had no patience to hear so much said in favour of such a yea-and-nay soul as lady Langdale; and Miss Holcroft had employment of too much moment, having condescended to try an experiment on the heart of a recruiting officer, who had lately made his entrée at Worcester. Thus the baronet was compelled to find a listener in Miss Slingsby, preferring her to her father, as a matter of course; for what man would

would not rather expose a weak side to a woman, than to even the most amiable of his own sex? In man he seeks an adviser or approver, in woman he looks for a sympathizer and admirer.

Miss Slingsby was extremely pleased with the suavity of lady Langdale's manners, and exceedingly struck with her superior beauty and elegance; she had therefore no difficulty in listening to eulogiums that accorded with her own feelings: too modest for rivalry, and too ingenuous for disguise, she listened to the praises of a charming womanfrom the lips of a very pleasant man, till it became evident, to both her father and lady Elizabeth, that these conversations had the happiest effect on her health and spirits pour le present; but how far the temporary amendment was desirable, was a matter of the most serious consideration to both: and the fears now awakened in the heart of a tender father for the welfare of his last and only hope, induced Mr. Slingsby to hasten their departure into Yorkshire.

shire, which lady Elizabeth consented to, with the greater avidity, because Miss Slingsby had promised to spend some time with her ladyship at her own seat, so soon as she thought her father could bear their separation with tolerable ease.

When this good man and his amiable daughter had taken leave, sir William declared that, in his opinion, Miss Slingsby was the most sensible young woman he had met with for many years; he thought too she was a very pretty figure, and had a pair of the most intelligent dark eyes he ever saw:—she was so amiable too!—so much above the general envy and vanity so common to pretty women, which she proved by her admiration of lady Langdale! "I am sure," added he, looking earnestly at lady Elizabeth, "she is a most charming girl, and I shall find a great loss of her indeed."

"I think exactly with you," said lady Elizabeth; "she is a truly excellent young woman,

woman, and I wish, with all my heart, she was well married."

"I cannot say I am equally generous," said the baronet; "I hope to spend many pleasant hours with her yet, and shall certainly visit your ladyship, during her stay with you, if I am not forbidden, and you think it will not be disagreeable to Miss Slingsby," added he, hesitatingly.

Lady Elizabeth suppressed a smile, while she assured him that she would consult the inclinations of her guest, and then act accordingly.

It was now near the time when sir Edward Langdale proposed going to London, and the busy circuit of country engagements gave way to preparations for that event; and lady Langdale thus regained his company, but could not, from that circumstance, be said to enjoy his society; his mind, engaged with the scene before it, was often absent, and his temper, naturally impetuous, and become irritable from self-indulgence,

indulgence, betrayed perpetual sallies of passion, from the delays of tradespeople, the awkwardness of domestics, and the various occurrences, which even the greatest favourites of fortune always meet with in their passage through life; and many times had occurred, when even Griselda, notwithstanding her utmost care not to give the shadow of offence, had been spoken to with a degree of acerbity, which was keenly felt, though meekly answered. Whether sir Edward had observed some signs of vexation or surprise in the countenance of Mrs. Gilbert, her maid, or whether he had, without even such a cause, taken some dislike to that good woman, is not known, but, about a week before they set out for town, he expressed an unqualified objection to Gilbert's accompanying them, and requested that she would either provide herself with another waiting-woman, or do so immediately on her arrival in London.

Though accustomed to an implicit unquestioning obedience, Griselda could not hear hear this request, or more properly command, unmoved; she begged to know in what respect Gilbert had been so unfortunate as to offend her master, since she could assert that she had ever found her so free from fault towards herself, and possessing so many excellent qualities, that to lose her would be a source of extreme mortification?

"I have told you I don't like her, and I should think that a sufficient reason; but if you do not think so, I can give two others—she is too old and too fat."

"The first, though not quite worthy of yourself, my dear Edward, is the only one I can adopt, for she is not yet fifty; and though somewhat lusty, is remarkably active: her best days have been mine; she nursed me when I was a babe, played with me when a child, and waited on me as a woman: but there has been no period of my life in which I could so ill dispense with her services as at this period; consider how unpleasant it will be for me to

have a stranger about me, at a time when every woman most wishes for a friend."

"I did not apprehend, lady Langdale, that you were in the habit of considering your servants positively in the light of friends, though I might, it is true, have discovered it, from the unprecedented indulgence you show them upon every occasion."

"I treat my servants kindly, sir Edward, and in return, am treated by them with that respect which indicates obedience as much as affection; I am never improperly familiar with them, I hope, as I have no secrets confided to their care, nor require from them any services unconnected with their open path of duty."

No one could possibly make a defence with more ingenuousness or less intention to offend than Griselda did in uttering these words; but sir Edward "winced," for his "withers were not unwrung;" and with that facility we all feel at times to attribute an unpleasant sensation to any cause but vol. 1.

the right one, he grew angry in proportion as he felt his anger to be unjust; and after using high and unwarrantable language to his wife, he at last insisted positively that if she did not send Gilbert away immediately, he would turn her out of the house himself.

"I will send her away," said Griselda, rising in great trepidation; "I beseech you leave it to me."

"Perhaps you want money for her there's my purse," said the baronet, throwing it on the table, not caring to look at the person he addressed.

The "hectic of a moment" flushed the cheek of Griselda, but she checked it as far as she was able; and putting the purse into sir Edward's hand, she said—"Gilbert does not want money; my mother did not leave the services of near thirty years to be rewarded by contingencies; and the little annuity she left her has been, since then, doubled by my aunt, who knew her worth: I am very thankful that she is thus saved

from suffering by any caprice or incapacity of mine."

As Griselda spoke, she slowly withdrew to execute her unwelcome mission; sir Edward felt uncomfortable, but his pride would not allow him to own his error, even to himself; the more he recollected of his own manners to his wife on this occasion. the more he felt ashamed of his unwarrantable petulance and unprovoked cruelty; and, to set himself at ease, he endeavoured, by every means he could devise, to find an error in Griselda's conduct: one moment he accused her of preferring her servants to him, another of obstinacy in her opinions, and a third of childish weakness; but all would not do; so as he could not sit at his ease with these impertinent thoughts perpetually breaking in upon him, he rose in a great hurry, determined to look after some papers and other mat-, ters, which he preferred packing himself to entrusting with his valet.

As he went up stairs towards his dressing—room, he heard audible sobs from Gilbert, who was in lady Langdale's room. "So," said he, internally, "here's a fine sentimental farce going on, I'll be bound for it; these two affectionate souls are parting for ever, and I am the tyrant who tears them asunder—how ridiculous!"

Unconsciously, he trod lighter as he approached the room, and, as the door was half open, he heard lady Langdale reply to the unintelligent accents of the weeping Gilbert thus—"Surely you are certain, my good Gilbert, that if sir Edward and myself could ensure your being treated in London with that affection and respect we know you merit, we should not hesitate to take you with us; but this we cannot do, for we must be surrounded by people whom we cannot influence; and, besides, you are not equal to the fatigue of the situation: I could not bring myself to hurry you up and down all those stairs, and make

you

you dress me three or four times a-day, or sit up for me till morning—indeed I could not, Gilbert."

Sir Edward passed on, and heard no more:

At supper-time, Griselda, with a placidic countenance, inquired if sir Edward had any commands for sir William Elland, as she should dispatch a messenger, very early in the morning, with a letter to his house for lady Elizabeth, who she hoped would, if possible, procure her a proper maid?

"Is there no young woman in your own village?—but indeed there cannot," said sir Edward, answering himself, "in the way you have them all brought up."

"Very true," said Griselda; "my Elmgirls are fit only for country ladies, and those too of the old school, as Mrs. Spencer calls it: for me to take one of them to town would never do; we should be a pair of spectacles, and the fashionable world would be ashamed of wearing us, except now and then, when we could be made useful, or were found necessary."

"The fashionable world will find you very useful if you will lose money amongst 'em. Do you mean to play, Griselda?-but of course you will do as other people do."

"If I should meet with that extraordinary possibility, the power of playing a sober rubber, I certainly shall play, but not else: in this respect I must adopt the licence which present manners abundantly llows, of setting up for an oddity, for I cannot do as other people do: I should hate to lose money, because I love to give it and spend it; and yet to win it would be still more disagreeable to me: how could I take money it would distress another to pay, and insult them to refuse?—no, I will never play! On this subject I need not refer to my principles, for my feelings are aufficient guides."

"Were you never told, Griselda, that high play was amongst the number of my aina?"

" Not exactly that; I did indeed hear that when you first went to London, you were

were blamable in that respect; but I knew that your spirits were greatly agitated at that time, and I concluded you were led into it as an amusement which tended to divert your mind from one controlling influence, which it was become your duty to eradicate. I concluded you had been unfortunate in the society you had fallen into, and that they had drawn you into an error which your maturer judgment would disapprove: I knew you could not be avaricious, and that is the decided characteristic of a true gambler, I apprehend; that you could become such a thing as that, never entered my head for a moment. Naturally impetuous, and impassioned as I knew your were, I felt no surprise at hearing you had lost large sums at Newmarket, because h knew you would bet large sums upon a favourite horse, not for love of the money but the animal; the same vivacity of character will show itself in different pursuits; but so long as it is unconnected with sordid R. 4

did views, it will not debase the character, though it may injure the fortune, and induce bad habits: the errors of a man who sometimes games are to be lamented, those of a determined gamester must be abhorred."

"Your morality is not severe, I must confess, Griselda," said sir Edward, "considering the strictness of your own conduct; it rarely happens that the upright themselves are so lenient towards their frail brethren; and I am sometimes puzzled to find how you can reconcile yourself to enduring that in others, which I amconvinced you could not for a moment tolerate in your own conduct."

"By remembering that I am not liable to the same temptations; that my path, in the language of scripture, has been hedged round on every side, either by sufferings or indulgencies; and that, of course, P cannot have been called upon to resist the impetuosity of temper, or the delusion of sircumstances which acted upon them."

"I hope

"I hope you have not sent Gilbert away to-night?"

"No, she stays till to-morrow evening, and then departs for Tewkesbury, where she has a cousin, with whom she will probably end her days."

Sir Edward said no more, and Gilbert accordingly departed on the morrow. The day following, a pretty-looking dressy woman, about three-and-twenty, presented herself to lady Langdale, along with the following letter from lady Elizabeth:—

" MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Your favour found me in the bustle of preparation for returning home, which I apprehend is a business of as much importance to an old maid as a young wife. I however delayed one day, that I might search the country hereabout in quest of the domestic you need: the young person who accompanies this is of course a stranger to me, but she hap-

pening to be at her sister's when my inquiries were issued, applied to me for the situation, under the auspices of Mrs. Spencer and Anne Holcroft, who both take upon themselves to assure me she has every requisite for the abigail of a woman of fashion, having lived more than two years with lady Oxminster, who, they say, is the pink of fashion, and who has taught hen every thing required in the modern art of undressing: why she left this lady I cannot exactly learn; but probably when you are in London you will inquire. With a thousand good wishes for your journey,

" I am, &c."

Lady Langdale was in too low spirits, from the recollection of her long-loved Gilbert, to pay much attention to the person who supplanted her, on her first coming; but as it appeared that sir Edward thought her a pleasant-looking smart girl, she was satisfied in the arrangement; and,

in the course of a day or two, set out for that metropolis which her lord was as anxious to visit as she was lothe to leave the house of his ancestors; their hopes and wishes had not one object in common, nor their pleasures one string in unison, except, indeed, that Griselda had pleasure in seeing him pleased; and from this motive the animation of his countenance might be said to enliven the complacency of hers.

CHAP. VI.

MARDLY was the arrival of sir Edward and lady Langdale announced in Portman-place, when the baronet's friends flocked round him from all quarters, partly to congratulate him on having married an heiress, and partly to condole with him for being

married at all. They were all struck, at least with the beauty and elegance of his lady, though her character might not happen to suit their ideas of the agreeable in a woman of ton.

"A fine woman! a devilish fine woman, egad! this Gloucestershire beauty that Langdale has married! have you seen her?" said lord Lackminster to sir David Drawley, as he joined him in Bond-street.

"Why, yes, my lord, I have seen her, my lord, 'tis true, but didn't strike—no soul, my lord—still life quite—cold as the lead in her grandfather's coffin—never do for Langdale, my lord, take my word for it: he'll make his bow to the countess again soon."

"Not if he has any eyes in his head," interrupted captain Seymour, who held the baronet's arm. "I am exactly of your lordship's opinion; the Langdale is a beautiful creature; she has the finest countenance I ever beheld; her 'eye's blue languish, and her golden hair,' are beautiful

to excess. Yes, you may groan, but I say to excess, sir David; they are voluptuously bewitching! but the dignity and modesty of her whole deportment scarcely allows one to apply the term to beauty, such as hers."

"Well, I'll say no more; your opinion, Seymour, is the criterion of fashion about women, I know; but, dam'me, if you're up to any thing else, by G—! Pray, my lord, do you know what cash Langdale has; touched with his Gloucestershire red-streak?"

"Estates to the amount of seven thousand per annum, I understand, and a neat sum in ready cash, which was her original, fortune, her father's estate going to the male heir; most probably this part of his redstreak's fortune, like the peel, has been thrown away before now, ha, ha, ha!" said his lordship, laughing at his own wit.

"The outside is the best side of too many women," said captain Seymour; "but I be lieve

lieve the core is the best in lady Langdale, and not 'the blooming tincture of a skin."

"Well, I give her up," yawned sir David; "inside or out, 'tis all the same to me: but do, Seymour, cure yourself of that damned trick of quoting authors; 'tis thegreatest bore in the world, dam'me if 'tisn't; don't you think so, my lord'? it always makes me think a man is an author himself; I wouldn't quote the best author in the world, dam'me if I would."

And yet you might do it with perfect safety; no one would suspect you, sir David," said the peer.

"They'd be cursedly wrong if they did, my lord; for I'll swear I never made two lines of poetry, or any thing of the kind, in my whole life, not even when I was at college."

"I dare be sworn you never did," said Seymour.

If the gentlemen were thus busy in scanning the personal accomplishments of our heroine, heroine, the ladies were at least equally so; and for near a fortnight, it was debated whether she was entitled to the praise of beauty or not; but at the end of that time, her appearance at a very magnificent ball, where she became the magnet of universal attraction to the men, at once decided'her claims; she became abused, ridiculed, admired, and imitated, from that very night; and her appearance, from thenceforward; watched for at every public place, as if she were the constellation whose rising was the signal for enjoyment: but, happily for the communicating star, these enjoyments were very scarce; when sir Bdward had exhibited his lady, and seeh her admired, he was satisfied; and she spent her evenings as she pleased. Having found her dear friend, Mrs. Barnet, in London. she was never at a loss for society, and at the little parties she met with at the major's, she found the company with whom her soul held converse: but she seldom left it without regretting that sir Edward $h_{2}d$ not partook the "feast of reason, and the flow of soul."

It soon appeared that major Barnet's fears were but too well founded, when he. foretold the baronet's lapse in London to his former follies; for several weeks he was almost continually engaged in parties, at which he frequently remained till it was so very late, that Griselda had been in bed some hours before his arrival, as she found her health by no means equal to late hours. As she was now visibly advanced in pregnancy, she was able to form a ready excuse for not mingling in scenes of dissipation she could not enjoy without offending the inviter; and though she frequently looked in upon a rout, she seldom remained above an hour.

As she was one evening descending the stairs, she heard two gentlemen behind her; one said, in a tone of pity, to the other—" You may laugh as you please at such conduct, but I cannot; if Langdale can abandon such a woman as that for lady Castlehowel.

Castlehowel, he deserves to be blown from the cannon mouth: 'tis enough that he should squander her fortune—her peace should have been sacred, even in the eyes of a prodigal.'

Griselda struggled to support herself, and had, she hoped, the satisfaction of reaching her carriage without betraying her emotion; but no sooner was she seated than she burst into an agony of tears; and it was with difficulty she attained any degree of composure before she alighted, when the inquisitive eyes of Middleton, her new maid, showed her the necessity of self-command.

"Dear me! lack my lady! I'm sure you're all of a flutter, as one may say—shall I get you some hartshorn?"

"If you please, Middleton; I am not well—I will go to bed directly."

When Middleton returned with the hartshorn, she presented it with a hand that trembled still more than the one which received it.

Lady Langdale had never been pleased with the fawning civility and curiosity which she fancied were the strongest traits in the character of this young woman, but the sympathy she appeared to take in her present feelings affected her much; she was hurt at herself for having owned any sentiment but a favourable one towards a person who appeared so interested in her; and her agitated mind read, in the concern evinced by Middleton's manners, a confirmation of those fears awakened by the conversation of the gentlemen; with Othello, she was ready to exclaim, "This honest creature knows much more than she reveals."

"When sir Edward comes home," said Griselda, "tell him I was obliged to leave. Mrs. Cartwright's early, and that was the reason he did not see me at lady Bellair's, as I promised."

"Certainly, my lady; I'll tell him, my lady, the moment he comes in."

Griselda was surprised at the alacrity

and vivacity with which Middleton pronounced these words; and on looking at her, she perceived that she had regained her colour, and that the strong marks of sympathy which had so recently been imprinted on her face were entirely fled.

"How weak—how very weak," said Grisel-da internally, "have I been! the casual observation of a stranger has wounded me even to agony, and led me to see every thing through a false medium: how true it is, that 'trifles, light as air, are to the jealous confirmation proof; strong as of holy writ!' I must get the better of this weak-ness."

This resolution was, slas! the pomp of words alone, for the heart denied its influence. All this night Griselds pressed a sleepless pillow, a barbed dart rankled in her bosom, and her efforts to extract it were in vain; a thousand little circumstances, hitherto unnoticed in sir Edward's conduct; that marked absence or indifference, now pressed on her mind, and wounded

wounded it to desperation; she began to see, for the first time, that his feelings to her had never been those of a lover since their union, and that the chastened fondiness, as she had falsely named it, of their second courtship, had not only lost the passion, but the tenderness of the first; and, in the bitterness of these recollections, she discovered that she, and she alone, had hitherto been the lover.

"If it be true that I am not—that I have not been beloved," said Griselda, "under what an error have I laboured! feeling in myself how much it was possible to endure for a beloved object, I flattered myself some sacrifices would be made for me, and that the longer I was known, the more justly my tender forbearance would be appreciated; but, alse! if I have no hold on his heart, how are all my hopes blasted!—and if he is so lost, so utterly undone, as to love another, what will become of him!—of me!—we are both utterly lost!—absolutely ruined!"

It may be supposed that this was among the evils Griselda had foreseen herself as well as her friend, when she married sir Edward; and so indeed it was; and she then believed her mind to be so fortified, as to enable her to endure even this greatest of all the sorrows she had forescen; but what woman, upon this occasion, would not be more a philosopher in theory than practice? and little must she be read in the human heart, who can suppose it possible for a woman who loves with the tenderness and purity of a Griselda, to arm herself with any arguments that could guard her from severe suffering, in a point where every human being that feels at all, feels most accutely; she felt that she could easily forgive her husband the error of a transient lapse, the effect of sudden temptation, though, as a Christian, she might deeply deplore his fall; but that he should systematically forsake her, that he should encourage a baneful passion in his own heart.

heart, and seek to awaken it in another, that other too a married woman, was a dereliction of principle she had not believed he could be guilty of: she recollected those precious moments, when a deep sense of his errors had so severely affected him, and she could not believe that a man, whose conscience evinced such sensibility, however transient, could determinately rush to ruin: she remembered that her mode of information was too vague to justify jealousy, and might arise either from that spirit of calumny of which she had met with a thousand instances since her arrival in London, or from that carelessness of another's reputation, which is still more common than the other, and which is equally baneful in its effects: from this train of reasoning, and a full conviction that it was her duty, at least, to believe the best, she regained at last such a degree of composure as to enable her to meet sir Edward at breakfast with her usual composure, though

her

her paleness bespoke the indisposition which she laboured under.

"You were unwell last night, I hear," said her cara sposa; "how are you this morning?"

Griselda assured him she was better: and as he did not look at her, he credited the assertion, and took his breakfast in silence; immediately after which, he rode out, and left his wife again to ruminate on the quiet indifference of his manners, in painful silence She had often felt that his sensations towards her were very different to those she experienced for him; but till now, she had endeavoured to find a thousand excuses for him; it was her misfortune now to find, or fancy reasons, instead of apologies. But from the cruel fluctuation of her thoughts, she was now relieved by the entrance of her dear Mrs. Barnet, who, having met with sir Edward and some other gentlemen, had learned that he had made an engagement for the day, and she now came to press Griselda to spend it with her, which she found no difficulty in doing; as she was equally

equally anxious to fly from her own thoughts, and seek comfort in the society of her ever valued friend; but not even in the presence of that friend did she allow herself to breathe one sigh, nor had a single word passed between them on the subject of sir Edward's conduct since her arrival in London; yet this mutual delicacy in nowise interrupted the freedom of their communion on all other subjects, far less could it be said to affect their mutual friendship and good will, which, if possible, was increased by a conduct which taught each to esteem the other more highly.

In the house of major Barnet, time passed pleasantly to Griselda, but yet it never failed to make a pensive impression on her mind; she could not help feeling then, more than at any other time, that the lot of her friend was far happier than her own; and though, like a fond wife, she fancied her own Edward had many more accomplishments and graces than the worthy major, yet she was forced to observe that his

his preference of a wife was not of the number. Her heart told her Maria was infinitely better beloved than she was, not-withstanding the claims she could not help feeling she had on the kindness of sir Edward: these sensations were, on this day, of course, felt with more acuteness than usual, and there were moments when it was with the greatest difficulty she repressed the impulse to throw herself on the bosom of her friend, and pour the load of sorrow that oppressed her into that kind repository.

The major's dinner-table was enlivened by the company of captain Seymour, who was an agreeable, amiable young man, and as little touched by the follies of the day as could be reasonably expected, when it was considered that he was tolerably rich, more than tolerably handsome, and was engaged in a profession where many errors are sanctioned by a kind of universal charter. Young as he was, he had seen much service, had been a close observer of the manners prevalent in other countries, and vol. I.

most worthy attention in them; so that his conversation was remarkably entertaining to a woman who had for many years conversed only with books; and Griselda, by degrees, lost in his company the depression which she brought from home with her, which so struck Mrs. Barnet, that she exclaimed—" I'm certain, lady Langdale, that company is the best thing in the world for you, and if I were your physician, I should certainly prescribe a mild dose of dissipation, taken every evening, at proper hours:
—to begin, what say you to the Opera tonight?"

"I say, dissipation being exactly the reverse to company, in my opinion, if the one is good for me, the second cannot; but I have no objection to your recipe of the evening, because I apprehend you know that the spectacle is likely to be gratifying."

This matter being speedily adjusted, the major and captain Seymour agreed to es-

cort

cort them. The ballet was interesting, and the music remarkably fine; and Griselda, who was an enthusiast in her passion for it, forgot her morning cares in the delirium of the hour. During the pause between the second and third acts, her attention was arrested by the entrée of a lady on the opposite side, of a very elegant figure, and dressed in the complete costume of the reigning mode; she spoke and laughed, as she entered, to the gentlemen who attended her, with that ease which bespoke her well with herself, and careless of others. As Mrs. Barnet saw she attracted lady Langdale's attention, she' whispered, "That is the beautiful countess of Castlehowel; but I suppose you know her. I see sir Edward is of her party!"

As Mrs. Barnet spoke, the countess drew sir Edward forward, and placed him on the only vacant seat beside her, though a young nobleman, who handed her in, was evidently extremely chagrined at this pointed

pointed preserence; whatever might be his feelings on the occasion, they were deficient in poignancy to those that assailed the heart of lady Langdale; she struggled, however, as well as she was able, and the recommencement of the piece relieved her: she endeavoured to remember that the circumstance would not have affected her in the least a week ago, and that she had no right as yet to attribute blame to either party, though the smiles of the lady, which she could not help observing, were of a nature to confirm suspicion, if not to excite it. In a short time, her attentions grew still more pointed, she completely turned her face from the stage, and was evidently absorbed in a whispering conversation with sir Edward.

The lights, the stage, the company, swam before the eyes of Griselda; she ceased to see or hear any thing around her; she pressed Mrs. Barnet's hand convulsively, and said—"I am not well; pray take me home,

home, if it be possible," rising as she spoke; but, overcome with trepidation, instantly reseating herself.

At this moment sir Edward arose; he appeared to make a hasty apology to his fair entertainer, and instantly left her box.

"There's a good man!" exclaimed Mrs. Barnet; "I saw he only perceived you for the first time when you arose, and he is hastening to you, probably fearing the heat was too much for you."

The heart of Griselda throbbed as if it would burst from her bosom; she felt as if more than life was suspended on this single point of time: Was her heart's beloved indeed flying to her assistance ?-how could she be so cruel as to wrong him for 2 moment?—how weak, how childish, had she been, not to see that the usages of society had compelled him to become the occasional attendant of a woman of fashion? But surely he might have reached her before this time. She cast her eye towards the

the door, but no one entered; the major opened it—sir Edward was not there.

There are moments in the lives of every one which seem to concentrate ages of feeling, and these were such to Griselda.

In a few moments the countess of Castle-howel left her box; and Mrs. Barnet, dreading lest Griselda should absolutely faint, sent captain Seymour to see for a carriage.

On their arrival at the lobby, the countess was waiting for her chariot, but sir Edward was not there. Griselda respired more freely.

Captain Seymour in a few minutes returned, declaring, very audibly, there was no carriage to be had except lady Castle-howel's, which was just drawing up to the door.

"And which," said the countess, with inexpressible frankness, "is very much at the service of captain Seymour's friend." As she spoke she advanced to Mrs. Barnet and

and Griselda, entreating them to use no ceremony.

Mrs. Barnet began to say that "she hoped lady Langdale would soon be better, and—" but she was interrupted by the countess felicitating herself on being introduced to lady Langdale, by any circumstance, adding, with amazing self-possession—" It is not five minutes since I was pouring a whole flood of apologies into Langdale's ear, for my apparent neglect, but real misfortune, in not having paid my respects to lady Langdale ere this."

Griselda, much recovered, received her ladyship with that politeness which was natural to her; and as the countess declared she was on the wing to a rout, in the neighbourhood of Portman-square, Griselda agreed to be set down by her at her own house, and entreated her friends to return to the entertainment she had so unfortunately interrupted; in a few minutes, therefore, she found herself tête-à-tête with a woman who had been to her, either innocently

cently or otherwise, the cause of the acutest pain she had ever felt: her mind. was still in a state of the utmost confusion; she dreaded lest sir Edward should have only preceded lady Castlehowel to the rout she spoke of. His sudden disappearance, at the sight of her, puzzled her exceedingly; but the circumstance most inexplicable was the perfect nonchalance, the engaging suavity of the countess of Castlehowel, who chatted away, upon all the common topics of conversation, with an ease and vivacity so totally different to all the ideas Griselda could possibly form of a woman who nursed a guilty flame, that she really felt ashamed of having allowed such unworthy suspicions to affect her mind, and was almost humbled, under a sense of her own injustice: yet, the more charming the countess appeared, the more apt she was to indulge the dreadful idea of her power over the mind of sir Edward; these contending anxieties rendered her totally unequal to conversation, and the only moment

ment of relief she felt, during this unexpected rencounter, was that which announced her arrival at her own house.

The countess, in wishing her good-night, said she would not fail calling in the morning, and hoped to witness her perfect recovery.

Poor Griselda answered, neglectingly, she knew not what, and passed onwards to her dressing-room, telling the footman who attended to send Middleton immediately; but recollecting herself, she said—"No, I will sit up till sir Edward comes in, so she need not come till my bell rings."

"My master has been at home near half an hour, my lady."

"Indeed!" said Griselda, with unfeigned surprise and pleasure.

Her emotion encouraged the man, and he proceeded, with evident satisfaction, to say—" My master, ma'am, was at home before your ladyship last night above an hour; and last week, when your ladyship was at 15 general

general Lawson's, he was at home the whole evening."

How much farther the communication might have extended is uncertain, for, at this moment, it was interrupted by the appearance of Middleton, who, with a look of great anxiety, came running to inquire if her lady was unwell again; and on being informed that she had been a little indisposed at the Opera, but was now better, she began, in no very consolatory tone, to say—" Dear me, it was mighty odd; she could not at all account for persons being took poorly at such strange hours, and getting better again as 'tween all at once."

Though by no means pleased with the manner of this speech, which bordered on impertinence, lady Langdale was too recently relieved from one painful emotion to give way to another; she therefore replied, with great calmness, that though she had been unfortunate in being a little indisposed two nights together, yet she hoped

hoped it would not be the case again; adding, "at least I will guard against it one way, for I shall not go out again during my stay in London."

This resolution appeared to paralyse Middleton, and she almost screamed—" Nat go out again, my lady! lack, what will people say, I wonder!—Dear me, why, what does it signify if your ladyship has been a little poorly or so? that's no reason at all you shouldn't go out again, I be sure."

Griselda, teased with her loquacity, and somewhat struck with the singularity of her manners, inquired where sir Edward was? and learning that he was in his dressing-room, she went thither directly. On being admitted, she informed him by whom she had been brought home, and expressed some little surprise; that when he left lady Castlehowel's box, he did not step forward to major Barnet's, as she had hoped and expected he would have done.

The air of confusion and embarrassment 16 with

with which sir Edward received this account, again awoke the bane of repose in Griselda's agitated bosom; but on his saying that he left the Opera on account of a violent spasm in his side, which made him hasten home, in order that he might get to bed, her fears took a very different turn. With great anxiety she took his hand, and having perceived the changes in his complexion to be frequent, began to be seriously alarmed, saying—"I doubt, my love, you were not well yesterday, for Johnson says you were at home before me last night: why did you conceal this from me?"

"I thought it very trifling; you were not well yourself: and—What is the matter?"

Griselda burst into a passion of tears; her ingenuous heart, full of self-reproach, could not endure the recollection of having internally accused her husband, at the very time when he had been concealing his illness from her, from motives of tenderness. She twice essayed to speak, and tell him all that had passed in her mind, for the

last twenty-four hours, but the violence of her emotions prevented her; and whilst she struggled to regain composure, sir Edward, who felt the necessity of doing something, summoned his valet to procure him some drops, and to put him to bed, and the presence of this person prevented poor Griselda's meditated confession, as sir Edward declared himself disposed to sleep, and she retired to her own room, which being only separated by a partition, would enable her still to listen to him, and, if it were necessary, attend to his indisposition. No such circumstance, however, occurred, as sir Edward's spasms disappeared with his wife.

When Griselda endeavoured to recal the events of the day to her mind, she found much to affect and surprise her; for though she had been violently agitated, under the idea of having wronged her husband by unjust suspicions, yet not even the transition of her opinions, on this subject, restored her to peace, since she could not help

help observing that sir Edward wished for her absence; and she thought it would have been more natural for him to wish that she should have remained with him, especially as she had, from circumstances he could not possibly divine, appeared much more afflicted than the occasion warranted. Ought he not to have inquired a little further into the occasion of her agitation?—but if he was ill, poor man, did it not account for every thing?

This idea gained possession he for heart; ever alive to the tenderest solicitude, she found every other fear give way to that which involved his safety. After listening a considerable time, and not finding, from any sound in his apartment, that he was restless, she hoped he had fallen asleep, and endeavoured to compose herself; but conscious that the knowledge of his being actually so would tend more to her comfort than any other circumstance, she rose softly, and taking her lamp in her hand, went into his room. As she set down the lamp,

lamp, she thought he was speaking in a low voice, but, on approaching the bed, she found he was asleep; but his cheek was flushed, and his arms were thrown on the bed, as if he was agitated with an unpleasant dream: thinking she ought to wake him, and wishing to do it in the gentlest way imaginable, she took hold of his hand, and stooped to kiss his forehead. As she did this, he murmured, in the half intelligent voice which characterizes the language of sleep, words that sounded, "Oh Sally!"

"It must be Griselda," said she; "but it is only the S which is intelligible.—Yes, my love, thy Selda is near," said she, aloud, at the same moment pressing his hand.

Sir Edward awaked, and exclaimed, as he rubbed his hand hastily across his eyes—
"Good God! my dear girl, how could you be so very imprudent?"

The tone of tender alarm which accompanied these words awaked a chord of lively gratitude in Griselda; she assured him that she

she should be no worse for just stepping into his room; and that, as she had been the means of freeing him from an unpleasant dream, she could not help rejoicing in it.

"You are very good, lady Langdale," said sir Edward, with a long yawn; "but really, I am sorry—very sorry you took this trouble.—Pray—praygo to bed again."

"Ah! my dear Edward, you are too anxious about me; I see you affect being more sleepy than you are:—well, well, good-night, my love," said Griselda; and kissing his cheek, she retired to her own bed, and was soon overwhelmed with that slumber her exhausted spirits wanted: but her visit had effectually scared the downy god from the pillow of her husband, and his meditations were not of a nature to excite envy.

CHAP. VII.

THE following morning, sir Edward appeared to have perfectly recovered his usual health, but his spirits were by no means lively; but Griselda, though suffering under a violent headach, and considerable nervous debility, exerted herself exceedingly to render his breakfast agreeable, and at length, in some measure, succeeded: among other topics of chit-chat, she casually mentioned lady Castlehowel's professing an intention of calling upon her that morning; to which sir Edward replied-"Aye, I remember she was giving me a long string of reasons and apologies about not having seen you last night, but her professions, like her face, being somewha

what too highly rouged for my taste, they nearly slipt my memory."

"The countess appeared to me a very charming woman," said Griselda, looking earnestly at sir Edward; "but, from the manner you speak of her to me, she is not a favourite with you."

" I speak to you with more frankness of her than I should do to any one else: it was my misfortune, last winter but one, to think her a very charming woman, but the tables are turned a little at present : she is one of those kind of women who fascinate whoever they attract; there is no medium in the sensation they inspire; but, when the spell is once broken, the disenchantment is complete; she was my passion once, and acts as if I were hers even now: I I tell you this to keep you from uneasiness, in case she visits here frequently, for you have not any idea of the frankness of her ladyship's manners, when she is in the humour to be very kind."

"I have, however, an idea of the grati-

tude I owe you for this generous candour, my dear Edward; it may save me from many a jealous pang, which, from this moment, I shall never allow myself to feel; I have no words with which I can express my sense of your affection in this openness."

Sir Edward blushed excessively as he received the thanks and caresses of the delighted Griselda, who, at any other moment, would have perceived that he actually shrunk from her embraces; but occupied with the delightful assurance that she still enjoyed that place in his heart which she had ever pictured to herself as the means of leading him in time to the practice of every virtue, and the enjoyment of virtuous happiness, her golden vision of future blessedness returned, and, in the delightful contemplation, she overlooked the different expression of his too faithful countenance, While Griselda indulged her feelings, and sir Edward struggled with his, the countess of Castlehowel was announced.

and

and entered ere the crimson had forsaken his cheek, or the tear that gemm'd her eye was wiped away; but the appearance of the lady restored the composure of each.

"Well!" exclaimed the countess, "what one lives to see!—the gay Lothario tête-à-tête with his own wife!—' tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Askelon!' lest the societies for reform should triumph, and the daughters of methodism rejoice!—Oh! lady Langdale, what a great deal have you to answer for!—you have been guilty of a monopoly, productive of infinitely more mischief than all the cornbuyers that the canaille are at this very time making such a rout about."

"The world of fashion must be grievously reduced if it starves for the loss of only one, and him, too, taken but for an hour or two in the morning. Your ladyship must recollect that sir Edward was not such a benedict as to attend upon his wife last night."

"Granted; but the charge of monopoly remains

remains good, for that divine stoic, Seymour, was your ladyship's attendant."

"If captain Seymour is a stoic, his attendance will not greatly flatter the party attended."

"Probably you may teach the marble to feel, but I call him a stoic, because I was deficient in the powers of Pigmalion; I could not steal fire from above or below that could animate the statue:—what do you think of him, sir Edward?"

"I think him a handsome man, and I should suppose a sensible worthy one, as he is particularly intimate with major Barnet."

"Umph!" said the countess, "and it has not entered your sagacious head to recollect, that the said major's wife has a pair of the finest black eyes in England; that she is, moreover, a sober, discreet, virtuous matron, the character of all others, for a sentimental man like Seymour to form a penchant for:—don't you see all this?"

"Good Heavens, my lady!" exclaimed Griselda, Griselda, in breathless impatience, "you have no idea of the woman you speak of! a more excellent creature never lived, nor a happier couple can possibly exist than the major and Maria: I have known her all my life, and can aver that——"

"Ah! well, you need not aver any thing; she is your friend, I perceive, and I will allow her every merit for possessing that envied distinction; I receive masks next week, and will send her a card; she will add to your pleasure, and I hope you will prevail on her to accompany you, notwithstanding the general sobriety of her habits."

Lady Langdale assured the countess that her indisposition the two last evenings had induced her to resolve on declining all engagements; but the lady would not hear of a refusal; and as sir Edward joined in wishing Griselda to partake of an amusement that was new to her, she at length gave a kind of half promise, on which the countess thanked her, with an air of great satisfaction,

satisfaction, adding, with much naiveté—
"Well, having gained so much, I must prevail on you to go a little further; and that is, that you would spare this good man of yours from your apron strings just one hour, to go with me into the city; 'tis horrid to go alone, you know; and besides, my business there is of a nature to render a gentleman somewhat necessary, so you can't refuse me."

"Sir Edward's engagements," answered Griselda, "are all his own; I never interfere with the disposal of his time; he must answer for himself."

"I am sorry," said the baronet, "that

"Not another word—I wont hear—cannot, my dear sir—indeed I wont, so come along; you know I am sir Antony Absolute's eldest daughter when once I begin; my poor lord has long known it, to his sorrow, and my father knew it before him, poor soul; he always called me Sal Volatile." "Is your name Sarah, my lady?" said Griselda, with an eager, yet painful expression.

"Aye, sure.—Why, my dear, where can you have lived not to have heard of lady Sarah Strange? but, indeed, her freaks were a little before your time, as she has been now above a dozen years in the honourable capacity of a matron."

Her lively ladyship now seized on sir Edward, who, something loth, led her to the carriage, while the remembrance of the word Sally, uttered in his sleep by sir Edward, again discomposed the too sensitive mind of lady Langdale; but the recollection of sir Edward's ingenuousness dispelled the insinuating demon of jealousy, especially as she observed that his looks and manners coincided with his assurance that the spell, which he confessed had once bound him, was now effectually broken.

Griselda had been left a very short time to these reflections, when Mrs. Barnet, the major, major, and an elderly gentleman entered, to make, as Mrs. Barnet said, not only kind inquiries after her health, but to run away with her in order to improve it.

"Your prescription answered so ill last night," said Griselda, "that I am surprised at your temerity in venturing another."

"My prescriptions proceed from a different motive, and may therefore have a different effect," said Mrs. Barnet, gaily. "Last night I took you to the Opera from pure love—this morning I take you out from pure malice, I confess, for I am going to take you to a picture-auction."

"It is the only thing that you could tempt me with," said Griselda.

"Ah, there!" cried Maria, nodding to her husband, "did I not tell you that even the wise, the prudent lady Langdale, had, like other women, her failing place? now you shall see, that if I get her to a picture-auction, she will be as very a woman as the worst of us—that notwithstanding her scorn of extravagant fêtes, her ridicule of vol. 1.

expensive baubles, and her abhorrence of dice—notwithstanding the sufferings of the poor, the pressure of the times, which 'makes those think who never thought before,' she, even she, will be extravagant enough to buy pictures; for that is the sin which easily besets her; 'tis the ruling passion, and she will prove how much she is its slave, as you unbelievers in her weakness shall witness."

"Upon my word, Maria, you have made a very pretty oration at my expence," said Griselda; "but the misfortune is, that, like many other orations, ancient and modern, its accusations are without proof, and its conclusions void of truth; for as you well know that all my picture extravagancies tend to the encouragement of living merit, it must be allowed that I diminish the pressure of the times to a class of men whom it is allowed have been most unaccountably neglected, if we consider the high state of civilization and wealth this country has attained; and whose wants ought

ought to be the object of more than or-. dinary attention, since I never heard that a man's possession of genius rendered him invulnerable to the common evils of life: on the contrary, I believe it frequently increases his sensibility, and destroys his powers of endurance; in this point of view, then, my vice becomes a virtue, since it has the effect of generosity without ostentation in one party, or obligation in the other; and on the score of prudence, it is, 'at least, equally defensible, as the little property I possess in pictures does not merely retain, but increase its value. Depend upon it, this country, even now, possesses several artists, who, devoted to their pursuits, and ill provided with the means of facilitating their studies, scarcely know where to pillow their heads, whose works, when those heads are pillowed in the grave, will make posterity blush for the neglect they are now experiencing, and be to the possessor not merely an elegant amusement, but an actual treasure."

"Upon my word, madam," said the old gentleman, "you have made me so complete a convert to the propriety of buying pictures, even of modern artists, a thing I never thought of before, that I believe if I go with you I shall be tempted to sport a little money myself, which was the last thing I thought of when I came out this morning."

"Then, sir, I will go with you," said lady Langdale, with alacrity, and she rung immediately for her pelisse. As she was putting it on, major Barnet inquired after sir Edward, on which she informed them, that it was his own indisposition, and not any suspicion of hers, that had occasioned him to leave the Opera so suddenly; she added, too, an account of lady Castlehowel's visit that morning, and that she had hurried sir Edward away into the city; and all this was told with such evident gaieté de cœur on her part, that her friends immediately perceived how much she was relieved from the depression of yesterday; and the sincere

sincere affection they felt for her inspired them both with sympathetic joy; and they all set out for the auction-room in high spirits, Mrs. Barnet still rallying Griselda, as well as she could, on her passion for pictures. As they drove up to the door, their carriage was stopped a few moments, while the honourable Mrs. Ladrone alighted from hers. She was attended by a tall, elegant-looking young man, on whose arm she leaned familiarly, and to whose animated conversation she attended with evident pleasure. Griselda inquired of Mrs. Barnet who that beautiful woman was?

"'Tis the honourable Mrs. Ladrone, who was the beautiful, accomplished Julia Trevors, and, about three years ago, married a man old enough to be her grandfather, who has ever since absolutely immured her like an Egyptian mummy; nor would she have been allowed to creep out of her catacomb now, on any other occasion in life but a picture-auction, I'll answer for it; but happening to have a great penchant.

for drawing, which is, in fact, the business and consolation of her life, the curmudgeon does, I believe, allow her those indulgencies which are connected with that pursuit; among others we must reckon her drawing-master, the fine young man with whom you perceive she is so completely en familte."

"Mrs. Ladrone is, you say, a woman of fine taste, and——"

"Oh yes, very fine taste," interrupted Mrs. Barnet, laughing: "in my opinion, her taste is far superior to yours; she knows the artist is better than his work, and wisely gives preference to the finest production: she knows, too, that she is a very beautiful woman; and since 'tis the will of her Alexander to show her only to an Apelles, he must take the consequence, you know."

"My dear Maria, do you know that it is by this kind of raillery that even the most innocent circumstance or accident in life

may be construed into guilt, and the most virtuous woman be confounded with the most abandoned? The very circumstances you have mentioned entitle poor Mrs. Ladrone to greater allowances than most women can claim; young, inexperienced, and secluded from general society, that of an amiable, intelligent, and apparently elegant young man, devoted to the same pursuit, and enabled to render her that assistance which levels rank and commands attention, surely her situation commands pity from its danger, far more than blame for its levity; she has evidently the air of a woman blind to her own danger, not of one who courts her ruin, much less of one who admits or glories in the impropriety of her conduct."

"Well, my dear, you are very good; it is just like you to say so much for a person of whom you know so little; but the world will talk, you know; there is no possibility of making people hold their tongues."

"True.

"True, but there is no possibility of holding one's own: for instance, though I heard that captain Seymour visited major Barnet, because his wife had a pair of fine black eyes, and was one of your sober, sentimental women, calculated to nourish a romantic passion, I did not think it right to suffer such a remark to pass unreproved, much less should I have retailed it to the next person I met, even if Mrs. Barnet had not been my particular friend."

"Good God! what an infamous insinuation!—what a complete unfounded calumny! I did not think any one," cried Mrs. Barnet, "could have been wicked enough to make such a reflection!"

"Such things are," said Griselda, "and it is not always the very wicked who make them, though they are, I grant, the most likely to do it."

"Oh, Griselda!" said Mrs. Barnet, pressing her hand, "you have taught me a lesson I shall not soon forget I hope: but I am not given to slander; I was in a rattling.

thing humour, I believe, and poor Mrs. Ladrone crossed my path; 'tis true that was no excuse for my crushing her: fool, cruel fool that I was!—how do I know but she may be as innocent as myself, though unblessed with those mercies which are my security!—had she a husband like mine!—was she a mother!——"

Here Maria's self-accusation was cut short by major Barnet's observation, that a very fine picture, an original of Corregio's, was going to be put, up, and they pressed forward to get a nearer view, when a picture of a different nature struck Griselda. which was no other than the countess of Castlehowel and her husband in earnest conversation; at least, such it appeared on the part of the lady, as regardless of the picture and the surrounding company, with her hand placed upon his arm, she seemed to be informing him of some circumstance that greatly interested her, and he listened with such attention, that major Barnet had pressed close up to him, and given the salutation of the morning, before he was perceived.

Sir Edward started on hearing the major's voice, but it was with as much pleasure as surprise; and on seeing the ladies, he spoke to Mrs. Barnet with his usual ease, and observed to lady Langdale that he was glad she had come, as he hoped she would find amusement; adding, in an under voice, "You see my warning did not come too soon; I thought how she would manage."

The countess now began something like an explanation of her altered destination, saying she recollected, all at once, this Madona of the divine Corregio's was to be put up, and being an enthusiastic admirer of the old masters, she could not resist altering her course, and taking sir Edward with her, who she knew was an amateur.

Griselda, who, re-assured by her husband's frankness, was perfectly at ease with her ladyship, did not give her the pain of showing that she did not believe a syllable she uttered; but too honest to profess what what she did not feel, made a silent curtsey, which gave the countess a little embarrassment, that was soon augmented to a considerable degree by major Barnet's expressing a wish to catch the eye of captain Seymour, who had just entered the room, that he might ask him to dine with him; on which Maria, in a tone of alarm, begged he would do no such thing.

"Not do any such thing! what can you possibly mean, my dear? we have no engagement that I know of."

"Nor I neither," said Mrs. Barnet; "but, since I entered this room, I have heard that there are people wicked enough to insinuate that Seymour visits us too often, and that you are not so much his object.

[&]quot; As you are, my dear, hey?"

[&]quot; So I understand," said Maria.

[&]quot;Well, my love, as your husband, will you allow me the privilege of one, which is, I have always understood, that of speaking very plain truths?"

"Certainly, my dear; truth is what I want; if people will speak truth I shall be perfectly easy."

"Then the truth is, Maria, that captain Seymour visits us both from motives of the · purest esteem; but, having known me much the longer, I believe he is so ungallant as, of the two, to love me a little the better; so for Heaven's sake, clear that brow, and let me ask my friend to dinner: depend upon it, that although there are in every circle of society assassins of reputation, with whom the bravoes of Italy, when compared, become respectable characters, yet any stab such people may give your reputation must fall harmless, for your innocence and ingenuousness will alike defeat it: why, then, should you give them the pleasure of wounding your feelings, when they have failed in the less vulnerable part? depend upon it, your traducers have no right to exact such a sacrifice from you."

"True; but you have a right to exact every sacrifice from me, and I am almost sorry

sorry I have not one to make you:—go to Seymour, and ask him for a week to come, if you please."

As the major left her, Maria, turning to Griselda, said, "I am persuaded, fully persuaded, let men say what they will of the inconstancy of our sex, that if all husbands had been like major Barnet, there would not have been one instance of infidelity in the annals of woman,"

"I am so precisely of your way of thinking," said Griselda, "that I am fully persuaded neither you nor I will ever swell those annals, Maria."

"As the major is absent, ladies," said sir Edward, "I certainly ought to say something handsome for us both; but I am attending to the sale, which you seem to have forgot; the countess is however engaged in it with her whole soul; I never knew she-was an amateur till this morning."

"I shall expire," said the countess, "if that wretch in the corner outbids me."

The hammer dropped—the wretch in the corner

corner had not outbade her; and yet, if the rouge had permitted it, the countess would have shewn that she was ready to expire, and that it was the circumstance of her getting the picture which produced that effect. The conversation she had witnessed had discomposed her nerves, and induced her to bid at the picture, which was the lat thing she had intended on her coming into the room, as her finances were by no means in a state to allow of this species of expence, Christie being a kind of creditor to which she had an utter aversion; but · self-command being her ladyship's forte, she affected to receive the congratulations of several around her with great pleasure; and then, turning with an air of self-gratulation to lady Langdale, whispered, "I meant you to have it all the while; I know you have a passion for pictures: and this Madona is exactly to your tasteso mild, so graceful, so dignified; don't say a word about it; you shall have it positively, though there is not another creature in the world to whom I would spare it for twice the money."

"I admire the picture very much, but I had certainly no intention whatever of purchasing it," said lady Langdale, "and therefore will not rob your ladyship of an acquisition you doubtless value highly."

But the countess was not thus to be repulsed; she pressed her dear lady Langdale to accept the purchase, beyond all bounds of politeness; but, to her utter astonishment, found a firmness in the refusal of lady Langdale, which, though perfectly polite, proved that the countess had quite mistaken her character, when she concluded her to be a mere country gentlewoman, who, proud of the attentions of a peeress of high fashion, might be made to play the puppet when her ladyship drew the wires.

Griselda, partly to rid herself of importunities she determined to resist, desired sir Edward to lead her to some small pictures in another part of the room; and Mrs. Barnet, who began to conceive what were the

countess's.

countess's real motives for so obligingly offering the picture to her friend, and being too good-natured not to feel pain for every one whom she thought in any way. suffering, began to observe, in a consolatory way, for how little money very valuable pictures had been sold of late. The affability of her manners convinced the countess that lady Langdale had not discovered the name of her accuser to Mrs. Barnet; and satisfied in this circumstance, she replied to her overtures with all that frankness and grace for which she was remarkable; saying, as to the picture, she should not have bid for it, but that she concluded lady Langdale wished for it, but would not bid for it in the presence of her liege lord-" Entre nous, my dear Mrs. Barnet," continued her ladyship, "I know Langdale thoroughly, and I am convinced, at this moment, your fair friend would have gladly taken the picture if he had not been here, for she has a taste for those kind of things; and what woman among us does not

not indulge her taste when she can? But he is an expensive man himself, a very expensive man; he gave eight hundred guineas, I hear, for a horse last week, and he is now having a carriage made at Hatchet's, which he means to be the most dashing thing in town, merely because he will cut down lord Lackminster and earl Weatherlegs: these are foolish things, my dear Mrs. Barnet, very foolish, when one recollects that he was completely ruined when he married your friend, and has already got more horses and carriages than he can possibly support. These things I fear keep poor lady Langdale so low that she cannot indulge herself as she ought. As to her saying that she was fond of buying the works of modern artists, you know the thing is altogether impossible."

"But indeed, my lady," interrupted the impatient auditor, "indeed you are mistaken in that respect; I know that lady Langdale really prefers, or, at least, that she al-

ways.

ways purchases, the works of our own artists; and that she does not want money I could give ample proof, if I were at liberty to mention her charities."

The conversation was interrupted by Griselda's return, who, having purchased two small pictures of Linnell's, the only ones she approved in the room, proposed going home; and the major and his friend joining them at the same time, the motion became general; and the countess was condemned to retain her purchase, when chance relieved her, by captain Seymour's declaration that he admired it prodigiously, and wishing he had been the purchaser.

The countess said she almost wished he had, for that, unluckily, the face was so strikingly like an inmate of her family, that she was sadly afraid it would be mistaken for a portrait, and thus the praise of the immortal Corregio transferred to a modern dauber.

"Then allow me to take it off your ladyship's. ship's hand," said Seymour; " for it will not offend my eye, even under the ignominy of such a conclusion."

The lady, "nothing loth," consented, and the party broke up; but sir Edward neither accompanied one part nor the other; but after lamenting that his engagements had been broken in upon, withdrew, and Griseida spent the rest of the day alone; but as it was not unemployed, it could not be unhappy; she was now looking forward to the time of her return to the Grove; and she had many letters to write relative to the alterations she wished to be made in the gardens, which sir Edward left to her care, rather out of indolence than kindness; having answered her inquiries after his pleasure, in the laconic style of "do as you like, I care nothing about it." Besides this employment, she had likewise several dinner-parties to receive, and some visits to pay, which she employed her leisure in arranging; her end in receiving company being not to bring

bring a great number of people together to admire the magnificence of her table and the costliness of her entertainment, but so to discriminate the characters and connexions of the persons invited, that each should find himself in the circle he wished, and thus enjoy that pleasure which is the zest of society: and in this. happy art of arranging her parties, lady Langdale had hitherto succeeded so admirably, that sir Edward, who lived entirely in the world, declared he never met with any company equally delightful with that which assembled at his own house, nor any table. where there was an equal combination of modern elegance and old-fashioned plenty; and this he was too much of an English gentleman not to value and approve; and so precious was even the most trivial proof. of his approbation to his wife, that she never heard it expressed without redoubling her efforts to render it permanent.

CHAP. VII.

For several succeeding days, Griselda saw very little of her husband, except at breakfast, which, whether he took early or late, she always contrived to take with him; he frequently complained of being unwell, and there was a restless activity about him which implied nervous irritability, and furnished an excuse for the frequent petulance of his manners at some times, and his silence and absence at others. Griselda flattered herself that he would soon be well when they got into the country; and as he would not hear of consulting a physician, whom he very justly observed could have done him no good, she en-. deavoured to bear this evil with patience,

in the hope of its speedy removal: but another occurred, which she did not think equally entitled to her forbearance; this was the frequent impertinence of Middleton, who, perceiving that her lady had really adopted the design of spending her evenings at home, appeared, on her part, equally determined to make her home untenable; she was perpetually breaking in upon her with some complaints of her fellow-servants, or she observed a haughty sullenness, which ended in fits of crying, or else she was very ill, and more fit for a nurse than waiting on other people; and when the greatest kindness was shewn to her new-found complaints, and she was desired to remain in her own apartment, it was then her pleasure to visit her cousin in the city—she had never been used to such confinement—she was absolutely chained to her cage—no human being ever led such a life, she was confident, as she did-God help her.

Complaint, invective, and impertinence, from

From those under her own roof, had, till now, never reached Griselda, and she felt as if she knew not how to act in so novel a situation; conscious that her own mind had been lately much discomposed, she carefully examined every word and action, lest she should indeed have been guilty of any unkindness in her manner that could justify the indirect charges of Middleton; but not recollecting any, and finding herself treated with an indignity it did not become her to submit to, she one day mentioned the matter to sir Edward, and begged he would advise her what to do.

As sir Edward was himself, generally speaking, high in his manners, and irrascible in his temper, Griselda had been somewhat afraid of mentioning this to him, lest he should grow exceedingly angry with Middleton, and turn her out of the house in a violent manner; but, to her utter astonishment, he endeavoured to sooth the little asperity she had evinced, and said he thought she had fancied the matter worse-

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than it was; that ladies'-maids in London were accustomed to great liberties, and that Griselda's staying so much at home certainly put it out of Middleton's power to see her friends in the way she wished; that, for his own part, he thought she staid too much at home, and would advise her to go out again.

"I will do any thing you wish," said Griselda; "but I cannot go out to oblige my servant; that is a species of submission I have not learnt, either by precept or example; but Middleton shall have as much liberty as she wishes; her time in London is not long, and if she has friends here, I would wish her to enjoy them."

The day following, both sir Edward and his lady dined in a large party at general Harcourt's, who was a distant relation of Griselda's father, and his intimate friend, at one period of his life: the general had been many years abroad, and did not return till after the marriage of Griselda. From the result of his inquiries after the daughter

daughter of his old friend, he was led to conclude, that having been of late years immured in the country with her maiden. aunts, she had married the first man who made her an offer; and on learning that that man had for some years been considered a man of high fashion, he concluded that he had married her for the sake of her estate; he was therefore not prepared to grant esteem to either party: but the recollection of his friend induced him to feel pity for his daughter; and he prevailed on his lady, who was a high but very worthy woman, to call on Griselda. Her reports were so favourable, that the general was induced to wish for a further acquaintance; and as his name was a passport to respect, and his society included all that was most valuable in rank and literature, sir Edward did himself the justice of gladly accepting his invitation.

When lady Elinor Harcourt presented Griselda to her husband, the general, he was pleased and affected by her appear-

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ance, for the tears stood in his eyes, and he welcomed her as one who had claims on his affection: nor was she less struck with the venerable form and intelligent countenance of the general, which, though considerably older, had a strong likeness of her ever-regretted father; he was the only person she had ever known who bore the same name; and though his relationship to her was distant, she knew she had no one of nearer kindred now left; all these circumstances struck so forcibly on her mind, that she approached him almost as another parent, and the cheek she offered to his lip was moistened with her tears.

"Alas!" said the general, internally, "in finding this lovely relative, I have found only another victim to that destructive sensibility which is the ruin of the sex;" but as his eye at that moment glanced on the fine form and open countenance of sir Edward, he flattered himself he must have been misinformed as to his character, and almost justified Griselda in her choice.

In a short time, the arrival of other company, by obliging the general and lady Elinor to divide their attentions, restored to all parties that cheerfulness a more tender emotion had suspended; but their manners to Griselda were marked with more than ordinary kindness; and there was perhaps no day in the course of her life when this amiable woman appeared to equal advantage. Notwithstanding the stores of her mind, enriched by all the cares a fond and judicious father could bestow, the brilliance of her imagination, improved by a passion for the fine arts, a taste for all most excellent in nature and ethics, and a genius that soared to all that is sublime in imagination and excellent in wisdom, yet the retirement of her habits. the humility of her principles, and the consciousness that many good people would condemn her conduct, since they could not comprehend her motives, operated so as to make her appear in company with an air of timidity and reserve, which, L 2 however.

however, never failed to give way to the approach of friendship, and ever vanished before the smiles of love. Captain Seymour observed to Mrs. Barnet one day, that sir Edward Langdale was content to have the handsomest woman in company; he did not choose to have her become likewise the most charming: but this gentleman, who was one of the general's party, had now an opportunity of seeing her mind expand, and her native cheerfulness assume its brightest hue; and though he did not observe the same pleasure glow on the countenance of sir Edward which he had often seen irradiate that of his friend, major Barnet, when his Maria amused them with her sportive sallies, yet he saw, with considerable satisfaction, that sir Edward was by no means insensible to the admiration his wife excited, and that, at least, his understanding approved the woman he had promised to love.

In the course of conversation, some disturbances were mentioned as having taken place place in the North of England, which the military had been called on to quell: a young officer observed, that the lenity of the commanding officer, on that occasion, had, in his humble opinion, been much more conspicuous than his wisdom or his courage.

"Allow me, as an old soldier, my good friend," said the general, " to say, you did well to give that as an humble opinion; for it is certainly not one you have a right to be proud of."

"Good God! general, how can you say so?" said lady Louisa Lovenot, with a languid sneer; "if those wretches are not shot, or hanged, or something, what will become of us pray? we shall be having all the horrors of France acted in England; and pray what are you military men good for if you do not protect us from such creatures?"

"Shooting or hanging may be a very speedy cure for that disease called starving," said the general, "and extirpation

will certainly save us from French horrors, my lady; but English soldiers are so foolish as to think themselves good for something better than drawing the bayonet on a famished mob, though it may sometimes be their duty to do it."

"Their famishing is all a farce, general," said a fat little knight, as he tossed off his bumper of Burgundy; "nobody can starve in this country; the laws provide against it."

"But who has not heard of the 'insolence of office, and the law's delay?" asked captain Seymour.

"After all," retorted the lady, "do you really and truly believe that the poor do starve, Seymour?—pray why can't they live on plain food, and be content? 'tis as good as their ancestors had.'

"True, my lady, or ours either; but I believe there are many places where that cannot be obtained."

"Nonsense," said an old lady, very angrily; "are there not soup-shops, and potato-houses, and things without end for them?

them? for my part, I have no patience with the fuss that is made about them, nor will I give one sixpence to any one subscription more, I declare; for I am thoroughly convinced, there is not one person now at table, in this large party, that has seen or known a single instance of a person starving; it is impossible they can all: go to the parish."

"Allow me to say, Mrs. Ranter, it by no means follows that there are no poor, because the present company has not seem them; in possession of many blessings, and surrounded with many comforts, few of us, I fear, think as we ought on our suffering fellow-creatures; but our blindness does not constitute their comfort, nor of course palliate our neglect," said lady Elinor.

"But your ladyship, with all your faith in their complaints, cannot say you have seen *one* starving family," said Mrs. Ranter, triumphantly.

"But," said Griselda, with great modesty, yet with a glow of virtuous indignation 1.4 animating

animating her fine countenance, " I have seen many families actually starving, both in London and the country, Mrs. Ranter, and I shall be very happy to show them both to you and lady Louisa: this very morning I beheld the father of a family breathing his last on the bare floor of his miserable garret, without even the comfort of a truss of straw, since even the purchase of that would have deprived his famished children of their scanty morsel; all the clothes and moveables of their lodging were already gone, and the only article of this wretched apartment was a broken teapot, from whence the wife poured a little water on the parched lips of her expiring husband."

"And could you go into such a place?" screamed lady Louisa; "bless my life, I should have expired at such a sight!—how did you know but the man would actually die?"

"He did die," said Griselda; "I witnessed his last sigh; and I hope yours and mine,

mine, lady Louisa, will be breathed as hap-

- "Oh, my God! don't mention it; you are a perfect stoic; I envy your insensibility; but really such a scene would have been the death of me."
- "And me too," said Mrs. Ranter, "I declares"
- "You must be mistaken, ladies, for it is not ten minutes since you were commanding fire and sword as the proper treatment for these kind of invalids," said the general; "and yet both Seymour and myself here can assure you, that we conceive a man dying in his bed a much prettier sight for a lady than a dozen wretches with their throats cut, or their brains blown out."
- "For Heaven's sake, general, don't talk so shockingly! I am sure, what with you and what with lady Langdale, I am all over in a tremor; I shan't recover myself to-night."
- "I am sorry you should be so much affected," said Griselda; "but the poor were challenged to appear, so pointedly, I

was provoked to be their champion; and I regret that your sensibility renders you unequal to further combat, as I could take you to seven different places in London, of which my knowledge is extremely circumscribed, where you might, with your own eyes, witness those distresses you have considered the offspring of fancy; and in the country, in the very small village where we reside, sir Edward has had the happiness to rescue five individuals, who would otherwise have actually perished for want, although the law had taken all the care of them that could be expected, since they were passing to their parishes in different parts of the kingdom: but the singular pressure of the times calls for the exercise of the law of humanity, which only can relieve them."

The old earl of Knaresborough, who, being a little deaf, had not joined in the conversation, fixed at this moment a look of such complacent approbation on sir Edward, that he felt the full value of a wife who

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who ensured him respect; at the same time, his heart was too noble to accept the praise he was conscious he did not merit; for though he had not forbid Griselda, in any positive way, from doing good in his neighbourhood, he was well aware he hadnever encouraged her, or in any way contributed to it; he had sometimes observed, in a careless way, that she must spend a deal of money on her schools and old people; but as he never found the money, and knew the income of her Yorkshire estate was all she could possibly spend, he concluded she was a good manager; and recollecting that her dress did not disgrace his rank, he made himself easy about it.

When the ladies had made a few more vain efforts to prove the Amazonian strength of Griselda's nerves, and her total insensibility, they withdrew, and the conversation took a natural turn on the political interests of the country, in which sir Edward displayed considerable knowledge, and decided abilities. The good old earl,

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whose high character for probity and wisdom rendered his attentions highly flattering to young men, paid him marked attention, and the general became extremely pleased with him; he felt the value of such men's good opinion, and almost wondered how he could ever have exchanged such a meed for the praise of jockeys, and the society of gamesters; and on joining the ladies, he approached Griselda with an air of animated tenderness, such as she had never seen before, and she thought this's evening the happiest she had known since her marriage. For the first time since her arrival in London, she sat down to a sober game at whist; but scarcely had she begun to play, when she perceived sir Edward called out of the room. On his return, his cheek was flushed, and his air embarrassed: he made a confused apology to the general for leaving him abruptly, saying he had entirely forgotten an engagement for the evening, until reminded of it by his servant; and then informing Griselda he should

should send the carriage for her at her usual hour, departed, leaving her as much overwhelmed with chagrin as a few moments before she had been exhilarated with pleasure and hope. In spite of her struggles to conceal the change that took place in her feelings, it was but too visible to the company at her table, for she knew not what: she played; but, happily for her, her partner, captain Seymour, was as desirous to hide her confusion as she could be herself; and having blundered through the rubber. which she lost, she declined playing any more that evening, and took her seat with lady Elinor, who was likewise disengaged, and who appeared pleased with the opportunity of enjoying her tête-à-tête.

But Griselda was not the same being she was two hours ago; and conscious of the depression being visible which her spirits suffered, she only increased the evil by endeavouring to remove it. Lady Elinor, seeing that she was unequal to support her share of the conversation, relieved her by informing

informing her of many interesting circumstances which had occurred to the general and herself, during their long absence from England; and her narrative was so pleasing, and her remarks so judicious, that in a short time Griselda was drawn out of the contemplation of her own little circle, and listened with avidity and interest.

When lady Eleanor paused, Griselda congratulated her, that, after so many years passed in a hot climate, and so many dangers incident to his profession, the general had returned in so much apparent health, to enjoy, in his own country, those laurels he had so nobly earned, and that repose so necessary for the comfort of declining life.

Lady Elinor sighed profoundly, and was silent.

"Alas!" thought Griselda, "even here hath sorrow planted some thorn which virtue may soften, but cannot extract: let me then submit, without a murmur, to the little trials it may be my lot to bear, especially

cially since they arise from circumstances which it is my duty to bear with patience, and alleviate by hope; shall I faint thus early in the work I have devoted my life to accomplish?"

While these thoughts were revolving in Griselda's mind, lady Elinor's eyes were anxiously bent on the general, who had been forming a new whist-party at the other end of the room: when she had seen him seated with his back towards them, she resumed the conversation thus:—

"It is probable, my dear lady Langdale, you do not know that I am the second wife of general Harcourt."

Lady Langdale said she was aware of that circumstance; and a tide of recollections rushed into her mind as she spoke, and glistened in her eyes.

"Ah!" said lady Elinor, "I see you have heard of the unfortunate daughter, whose fatal marriage ruined the peace of her father's mind, and destroyed her mother."

Griselda said she was very young when that event took place, and never heard the particulars; but that she had reason to remember it, since she had uniformly heard of the death of the general's first lady attributed to the disobedience of her only daughter, and there had been a period in her own life when this sad example had had its full effect on her own conduct; not from any opportunity she had possessed of comparing her situation with that of the young lady's in question, but merely because she had conceived an act of disobedience to have cost the life of a mother.

"The facts," said lady Elinor, "were simply these—the late Mrs. Harcourt was a woman of high family, and very large fortune; captain Harcourt was her equal in the former, but so decidedly her inferior in the latter, that her friends would not have been induced to listen for a moment to her entreaties on his behalf, but from the circumstance of their losing their only son, by a very distressing accident, which inclined

inclined them to listen to a daughter's wishes, in whom all their hopes were centered, and who was become the last representative of a once flourishing race; fearful lest the winds of heaven should visit too roughly the cheek of this adored being, they could not resist her tears, and at length yielded her to the handsome Harcourt, as he was then called, on the express condition, that whenever he should be ordered on the service of his country, she should be left with them; which was an offer thankfully acceded to.

"In about a year after, their marriage, to the inexpressible joy of the old people, Mrs. Harcourt presented them with a son; in the course of the next two years she had a daughter, who had scarcely blessed her father's eyes, when he was ordered to embark with his regiment for America, in which unfortunate service he continued till the final loss of the settlements; thus leaving his tender and anxious wife exposed to all the sorrows of such an absence, during

during all those years which are commonly reckoned the best of our existence.

"During the former part of this time, the parents of Mrs. Harcourt devoted themselves so exclusively to the health and improvement of their little grandson, that 'a sense of justice induced her to make her little girl an equal object of her peculiar care: this laid the foundation of that overweening fondness for her, which eventually proved injurious to both, though, at this time, it appeared particularly happy for the little Emily; for as it was evident that excessive care and indulgence weakened the constitution of the boy, Mrs. Harcourt, who was allowed to take her own way with the girl, by observing a contrary conduct, secured her daughter the advantage Locke calls the summit of human attainments, 'a sound mind in a healthy You see, my dear," said lady Elinor, smiling, "these are hints for your government; never having been a mother myself, I do not pretend to much knowledge in these cases, but, like many who know little, I am willing to give that little to my friends."

Griselda bowed, and the lady continued. "In a few years, the poor spoiled boy languished like a smitten flower, and Mrs. Harcourt saw, too late, that a false delicacy, in regard to the mistaken conduct of her parents, had deprived him of his sister's advantages: she applied herself, but too late, to the redress of those evils which were advanced beyond the power of remedy; her parents blamed her for adopting the only conduct that could have benefited the child, and when her designs failed, she blamed herself; the best medical aid was procured, various wateringplaces visited, air, earth, and water, ransacked for means of nourishment and amusement, but all in vain; the blossom was withered in the core, and the name of the family of the Laxingtons again consigned to oblivion, which it was intended by the fond grandsire should have survived in this fair scion. The poor boy died in his tenth year, and in something less than the two following, Mrs. Harcourt had closed the eyes of both her parents.

"Through the sufferings of these distressing changes, which must have been very severe trials, if we consider that she had never quitted the paternal roof, Mrs. Harcourt was supported by the innocent prattle and the unfolding powers of her little Emily, who, from all I can learn, was a child of uncommon promise; and soon after the death of her last parent, she had the satisfaction of receiving her long-lost husband, whose services had now raised him to the rank of colonel. I need not tell you," said lady Elinor, as she twinkled away the tears that sprang to her eyes, "how two such people felt after such an absence, and what were the feelings of the mother when she presented to him his blooming girl, then in her eleventh year; the circumstances of such a re-union are better conceived than described.

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"For near three years they enjoyed this felicity in peace; but about the end of that time the general's military arrangements obliged him to go to the East Indies, and Mrs. Harcourt, though at that time pregnant, determined to accompany him; and Emily, in whom she seemed almost to exist, was of course included in their arrangements; though, being scarcely fourteen, her education was by no means finished, which was the only source of regret they felt on the occasion, as their now ample fortune could every where secure those comforts and elegancies to which they were accustomed.

"Happily for Mrs. Harcourt, she arrived at Calcutta three weeks previous to her accouchement, and became the mother of another son; but this exotic required the bracing air of his northern home, and soon withered and died. The general was much hurt at the death of his second son, but it naturally led him to redouble his attentions to his daughter, whom he now saw as the undoubted

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undoubted heiress of her mother's estate; her beauty and accomplishments were every day unfolding, and the indulgence of her fond parents increased every hour; in this luxurious country Emily was treated like a princess, and seeing no one with whom she could compare herself, most probably the poor girl fancied she was without a peer, and that the world she found so sweet would be for ever what she saw it now; but she was naturally so mild and amiable that her manners never assumed the slightest tincture of hauteur, and the lowest of her sable attendants was encouraged to love by her affability.

"For some time after their arrival in India, the general was at a loss to procure for his daughter proper teachers in the polite accomplishments, particularly music; this inconvenience increased considerably on their leaving Calcutta for a distant garrison, where indeed nearly all their social pleasures were suspended, as there were no families resident except such

as belonged to the garrison. This apparent inconvenience turned out a real advantage; for while they lost splendid parties, they gained intimate acquaintance, as they found a few pleasant accomplished women, and a young subaltern of such various talents, and graceful manners, as would have made him an acquisition in any circle; of course he was considered the very soul of one so situated as this.

"This young man soon became a constant guest at the colonel's table; he played chess with him, and drafts with his lady. In a short time, it was found that he could not only play duets with Emily, but could greatly enlarge her knowledge of music by his scientific acquirements in that charming art: he could likewise draw very agreeably, and had amused himself of late with taking miniature likenesses of the ladies in the fort, some of which were pleasingly executed: but what the general most valued him for was his power of training, to the

full extent of its powers, the unrivalled sweetness of his Emily's voice.

"If the world," continued the lady. thoughtfully, "did not furnish us with such proofs every day, we should believe it impossible that two sensible people could bring together a young couple, like Emily and the unfortunate subaltern, without foreseeing that the similarity of age, taste, and pursuits, added to the local exclusion of all rivals to each, must produce at least a mutual confidence and tenderness which would notirish passion; yet at such an immense distance did they conclude fortune had placed them, that they never thought Nature could be so presumptuous as to foil her work; and the first circumstance which opened their eyes produced as much astonishment and terror as if a volcano had opened at their feet; and, in particular, the rage and grief of the mother beggared description; nor can I learn that she once recollected how very nearly

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her own conduct had resembled that of her daughter. The pride of blood and of fortune, probably increased by living so entirely with parents who made it the continual object of their conversation, and certainly not impaired by a residence in India, united, with her excessive, and, till now, blind affection for her daughter, to make her wretched even to madness; and she instigated the general to every declaration of anger the inflexible justice of his character would permit: but he, in the midst of his vexation, had the good sense to recollect how very fond he had himself been of this young man, and how unwisely he had acted in making one so formed to please the constant companion of a daughter at once susceptible and attractive.

"The poor girl had never considered the extent of her crime or her misfortune till she was informed of it by the cutting invectives of a mother, who, till now, had appeared to treat her as a being of supe-

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rior order; this conduct doubtless struck her as cruel and unjust, and the distress it inflicted led her to seek comfort in the very means they ought to have dreaded, as she established from that time some means of clandestine intercourse with a man who, till then, had most probably never become her professed lover; her sorrow reduced the boundary her rank had hitherto placed betwixt them; and the line of conduct he might have adopted as a man of honour, had he been treated as such, was rendered impracticable to an impassioned lover, urged by the sorrows of his mistress to attempt her rescue.

"Be that as it may, the colonel procured an order for his removal to a distant province, which he obeyed; but soon after his arrival there, it appears he sold his commission, and professed an intention of sailing for England with the first fleet. On hearing this, the general, fearful of his return to the precincts of the garrison, immediately

mediately sent his wife and daughter to Calcutta, intending to rejoin them there as soon as circumstances enabled him.

"On parting with his daughter, the general was exceedingly affected; but the poig-- nancy of her feelings arose to agony: she threw herself at his feet, and kissed and bathed them with her tears; her voice, choaked with sobs, was utterly unintelligible; and the wildness of her gestures, and the extravagance of her grief, alarmed the . general for her reason; he endeavoured to re-assure her, and told her repeatedly she had not only his sincere forgiveness for what was past, but his confidence for the time to come. These assurances seemed to convey little comfort to the weeping girl; but she at length commanded herself sufficiently to set out. Mrs. Harcourt was cold and distant, she neither consoled her sorrows nor excited her exertions; she acted as one who feels herself wounded beyond forgiveness; and in proportion as

she had been indulgent to a fault, she was now cold and hard-hearted.

"When arrived at Calcutta, she treated Emily with more lenity; she felt that the report of such a connexion would be a mortal stab to all her consequence in that place, where even the first connexions were hardly equal to her wishes and expectations for a daughter so richly gifted by nature and fortune; and she was desirous that no traces on Emily's countenance, no sadness in her manners, should give notice to the world of the sorrows of the garrison.

"But alas! the voice of fame is heard with equal celerity in the scorching atmosphere of Asia and the frigid breeze of Northern Europe: a whisper was already spread and magnified; it pierced the ear of Mrs. Harcourt, and congealed her very heart. Having no one to whom she could unload her mind of its 'perilous stuff,' in the absence of her husband, except the object

ject of her anger, she became severe, even to cruelty, to Emily, whom she abused as a being whose conduct had degraded her family, and who, in listening to the professions of a low fellow, had for ever forfeited her pretensions to any eligible connexion.

"To these accusations, Emily for some time replied only by her tears; but at length she expostulated: she observed that her own father had introduced this person. to her as a gentleman, which he certainly was by education and profession; that she was not aware of the state of her own affections till of late, and that tenderness. from parents, whom she had ever loved sofondly, would doubtless recover her heart, and restore her peace, if it were shown to her; but as she had not yet done any thing that could deserve such bitter reprehension. she would candidly own, that the unkindness with which she was treated made her more than ever attached to him for whose sake she suffered it.

"This avowal enraged Mrs. Harcourt beyond all bounds; she ordered Emily to quit her presence, and never presume again to mention in her hearing the wretch who had ruined her peace, and blasted the hopes of seventeen years of unceasing anxiety.

"Emily, more dead than alive, withdrew to her own apartment; she remained there the whole of that day and the following; but in the evening, Mrs. Harcourt, who was really ill with agitation, inquired if her daughter had dined? and being answered in the affirmative, dispatched a servant to inform her she might come to her boudoir; but the servant found the apartment empty; the garden was explored, but in vain: he returned and informed his lady that Missy was quite gone—he no find in any place.

**Could a thousand couriers have taken the wings of the wind, and traversed every region of the earth, poor Mrs. Harcourt would have sent them all in search of the fugitive: fugitive: forgetful herself of her indisposition, and of the impediments of habit and climate, she can about in every direction, and examined every place, till overcome by fatigue and despair, she sunk into a state of temporary insanity, which was succeeded by a delirious fever.

"In this state the general found her one his arrival, and from her confused ravings, he learnt that Emily had been treated by her with such severity, that the idea which now occupied her in her ravings was, that Emily had destroyed herself. The general lost no means for discovering this fatal truth, should it prove one; but all his researches were ineffectual on this head. In the course of his inquiries he learnt, that the day following that on which his daughter left the house, two young men had been admitted on board a vessel, bound for Madras, after she was under weigh; and from all the little he could learn, he had reason to conclude these mysterious passengers were Emilyandher lover:

"In a few days Mrs. Harcourt's fever gave way, and she was enabled to listen to the accounts her afflicted husband had been able to gather. As soon as she was relieved from the fear of Emily's death, her anger revived, and she urged the general to pursue, to the farthest corner of the earth, the wretch who had robbed them of their child. The general, who had no doubt of their having sailed for England, or rather that they would do so if possible from Madras, procured an order from the governor for their arrest, either at that place or the Cape, if they could be discovered; and he dispatched advices to England, offering a considerable reward to any one who should arrest the late lieutenant Curzon, as the inveigler of an heiress."

" Curzon!" said Griselda, with surprise.

"Yes, Curzon," repeated lady Elinor, in a low voice, not regarding lady Langdale's emotion. "I have hitherto avoided his name, not from intention, but habit, as there were many years in the general's life when when the bare mention of that name agitated him to the most distressing degree, and not one of his friends would have allowed themselves to utter it in his presence—But I digress. It was afterwards found that Curzon and Emily were really married at Madras, and sailed from thence to the Cape, from which place Emily wrote to her parents, imploring their forgiveness, and painting in strong colours the woe she must endure under a sense of their anger, even with a husband who tenderly loved her. These letters increased the anger of both parents for a time, but more especially Mrs. Harcourt's; but grief soon. overcame every other passion, when they further learnt that the young couple had gone from the Cape to Ireland, where they lived only a few months, and appeared to be in a forlorn situation, Emily being far advanced in her pregnancy; that from thence they had sailed for Scotland, but the weather being tempestuous, the vessel was wrecked. off the coast, and the greatest part of the

crew and passengers were lost; and though it could not be positively said Emily was of the number, her body not being specified as found, yet, when her situation was considered, there appeared no probability of her escape in a scene of such dreadful peril; and it appeared evident her husband had shared her fate, as no persons of their name had arrived at the little fishing town along with the remains of the ship-wrecked crew.

"And to this day, this sad detail is all that remains to the general of his ill-fated daughter, though it is now near nineteen years since she eloped. Mrs. Harcourt died within four months after the last fatal news of her child reached India; and the general having no attachments in England, remained there the full term of twenty-one years, which accounts for our arrival here so lately. He met with me at Madras, where I went to smooth the deathbed-pillow of my only sister, about ten years ago. I hope I have been of great

use to him, as since our marriage he has attained a resignation, and even cheerfulness, to which for many years he had been; a stranger; but our return to England has renewed his sorrows and self-reproaches in a great degree, as I always apprehended it would. Ah! my dear young friend, we live to see things in very different points of view as we advance in life; general Harcourt, who would, at one time, have presecuted Curzon to the last shilling of his fortune, now wishes he were alive, that he might make him some amends for what he probably has suffered: he recollects the situation in which he himself placed him? with a beautiful girl; and from his own feelings, overlooked in the pride of manhood, but remembered in the fall of life, which recalls its earliest feelings with the greatest zest, he judges of those of this unhappy man, whose only fault that he knows of was that of loving too tenderly the child he viewed himself with a feeling. bordering on idolatry."

"But," said Griselda, eagerly, "has the general renewed his inquiries lately?"

"Yes, he has advertised for any of Curzon's relations, in order that he may inquire from them if they ever really ascertained that he was shipwrecked? but we have not had any answer yet.—I suppose you saw the advertisement?"

"I did not see it myself; but on my calling yesterday morning on a poor woman, whom distress introduced to my acquaintance, I found her reading a bit of a newspaper, which seemed to interest her so much, that she could not even lay it down when I entered; and she accounted for it by saying it was an advertisement about some people whom she thought she knew very well, and who she always took somehow to be grand folks at bottom—'but,' she added, laying down the paper, 'as I am no relation at all, nor any thing to Mr. Curzon, I can have no business to meddle."

"Bless me!" cried lady Elinor, "there

is something which promises intelligence in this; where can I see the woman?"

"I will bring her here to-morrow," said lady Langdale; "and, in the mean time, you can prepare the general."

As that gentleman now approached them, the conversation took a different turn, and Griselda began to recollect that her time had been so occupied, it must be late; her carriage, however, did not come for above half an hour, and nearly all the company had set out before her.

On arriving at home, she asked hastily for Middleton,

"She is undressing, my lady," said the house-maid; "but I will send her."

"You will do yourself, Anne," said lady Langdale; and Anne, proud of being employed, tripped before her to her dressing-room, evidently full of some important communication, which she had no opportunity of disposing of; for lady Langdale, after simply inquiring if sir Edward

was at home, and being assured he was, in a short time dismissed her; and with her mind full of the hope that the general would gain, through her means, some intelligence of his long-lost daughter, lost the recollection of the unpleasant incident which hadtaken her husband from her, at the very moment when he appeared to be most her own. Although circumstances had induced her to feel jealousy, yether nature was so little prone to suspicion, that when it was once removed by the apparent candour of sir Edward, there was little danger of her relapsing into an error of that kind: but as it was impossible for her not to see in the countenance of sir Edward that all was not at ease in the little world within. she began to fear that he had been losing. money to lady Castlehowel at play, which it was not in his power to pay, and this, though a great misfortune, was, in her opinion, of infinitely less moment than the other; she therefore rested in a belief which afforded.

afforded at once a key to what appeared mysterious in his conduct and the lady's, and relief from her worst fears respecting them.

CHAP. VIII.

WHEN lady Langdale awoke the next morning, her bell was answered by Anne, who said Mrs. Middleton had sent word she was not well enough to wait on her ladyship.

As lady Langdale had been much used to Anne's attendance of late, she did not regret the circumstance; but being soon attired, went into the breakfast-parlour, where she waited a considerable time for sir Edward, who did not accost her by any means with the look of love that transported her the evening before; an air of

tullen embarrassment was on his brow, and he did not find one thing upon the break-fast-table that was fit to eat: his manners confirmed Griselda's fears, that he was accustomed to play high at lady Castlehowel's; and she doubted not but he had been there the night before. In the course of the dejeuné, lord Lackminster looked in, and in the current of his chat said—" Catalani sung divinely last night—didn't you think so, hey?—Gad, I seldom listen to the stage, but she fixed me last night—dam'me I was petrified—were not you?"

"Not absolutely," said sir Edward; but yet the baronet certainly looked a little struck at the time he was speaking, and Griselda was so little a disciple of lord Chesterfield that she was vulgar enough to be astonished: but yet she reflected it was much better that sir Edward should be at the theatre than with the countess at faro; and though it appeared unaccountable that he should leave the society where he appeared so happy, for an amusement he could

could have taken any other night, yet, upon the whole, she was glad to find him any where rather than in the society she most dreaded. As this thought passed in her mind, every shade was dispelled from her brow, and she began to speak to lord Lackminster of the party they had met the day before at the general's, particularly expressing her admiration of lord Knaresborough, who was his relation.

"I have left him this moment, poor old soul," said his lordship, "and I now see how it is, dam'me—he has been preaching an hour to me about marrying, ha, ha, ha! 'tis your ladyship that has inspired him. Gad, I thought something was running in his head devilish queer, for he praised Langdale up to the skies—said he had secured his happiness here and hereafter, and a great deal more of that kind of thing; but before I left his lordship, I gave him a dose of your morality, that posed him a little, dam'me—hey, sir Edward?"

3...

Here

Here his lordship winked aside at sime Edward, which was not observed by Griselda; but as she was vexed to be "so pestered with a popinjay," and the more as she found he had been so malicious as to prejudice the good old earl against sir Edward, she left the room, intending to proceed immediately with the poor womant to General Harcourt's.

"What a beautiful woman lady Lang-dale is!" said the dashing lord, as he left the room; "upon my soul, you are the luckiest fellow in existence—dam'me if I think your chere amis fit to hold the candle to your wife—hey?"

"That is an opinion I am not inclined to dispute," said the baronet; "for I do not think there is the smallest comparison."

"Very odd, dam'me," said lord Lack-minster; and with this sapient observation, which had more in it than every one would give it credit for, he took his leave.

Griselda took up the poor woman, and proceeded to the general's, in Dover-street.

She

She had waited some time for the person she called on; but her heart was too full of its interesting business to think that time lost, though spent on one of the humblest daughters of poverty, who, moreover, had begged leave just to step to the place where her husband worked, and tell him to run on to the general's, because he knew as much as she did about the matter, and may be the gentleman might choose to see These matters being adjusted, with many apologies she stept into the carriage, which, as it turned up St. James's-street, was passed by a splendid curricle, in which a gentleman was driving a lady, who wore a long white veil, which completely hid her; the gentleman could be no other, at à glance, than sir Edward; 'twas his figure exactly; but he was out of sight in a moment-" Who can it be?" ejaculated Griselda.

"I don't know indeed, madam," said the woman, simply; "but I ha seed 'em often of late; and I axed my husband, one day, if

he noed who 'em was, and he said that it was either a lord or a barrownight, or some great man as was driving his miss out, like a shameful man, for all he'd a wife of his own handsomer by afe."

"God help her," said Griselda, "and reform him;" and an involuntary sigh escaped her, though she assured herself that she was foolish in thinking this person resembled sir Edward.

They arrived at the general's, and Griselda forgot herself, and every one else, in him. He was sitting with lady Elinor in her dressing-room, and had given orders to be denied to every one but lady Langdale. On her entrance with the woman, he was much agitated; and the woman, unused to stand in the presence of such a fine gentleman, and in an uniform too, most earnestly besought lady Langdale to let her husband come up stairs, or else she did not think she should dare for to speak.

John came accordingly, but seemed quite as little likely to prove communicative; but

but when Griselda spoke to them, they were enabled to answer her interrogatories; and the woman, after trying to recollect herself, said—"I think, an please your worship, it will be nineteen years come February, John an me was at Belfast, where we went, dear heart, to see an old uncle, that promised to leave us all he had; and, dear heart alive—"

"Never mind your uncle, good woman, but tell us where you saw Mr. or Mrs. Curzon?" The general pronounced the names with evident difficulty.

"Why, sir, whilst we were at Belfast, staying with this here uncle, as I said, there came to lodge, at the very next door, the beautifulest young couple I ever seed with my eyes; and the lady, saving your presence, had a forehead very like your worship's honour; and her hair was very like my lady Langdale's; and she was fair as alabaster—a good deal like her, only not so tall—not so woman-like; but somehow, being in that situation, I never

seed

seed my lady in my life, but I directly thought of poor Mrs. Curzon."

The general gave a nod of encouragement, and the woman went on.

"And then, as to a man, sir, you would not wish to set your eyes on a more properer than Mr. Curzon."

The general frowned.

"Just tell us, good woman," said lady Elinor, "what you know about them; you need not describe them."

"Why, my lady madam, they took these lodgings, and at first they lived very genteel, and so on; but after a few weeks, people didn't somehow think they were rich; and as to her, poor thing, she pined and fretted very much, specially when he was out; for you see, madam, I waited on her all along as 'twere, being I was an English woman, and rather more tidier than them Irish women was; and dear heart alive, there wan't that varsal thing on earth she could do for herself; I never seed no little babe more helpless than she

swar like; and Mr. Curzon said as how she came from a great way beyond seas, where the ladies are all like queens, and have heaps of blackamoors to wait on them; but he didn't seem to be o'that sort hisself, for he waited o'she day and night."

"Are you sure of that?" said the general, eagerly.

"Sure! a that I am, your worship.

John, doesn't thee remember what pains he
took to get her lobsters, when she were
peaking and couldn't eat, and what hours
he used to watch her when she slept after
dinner? dear heart, if she'd a been a angel from heaven he could ha done no
more."

"If his heart wou'd have done her good,"
says the man, "he'd a pulled it fra his
breast and geen it her; that's all I say,
your honour."

"Proceed," said the general, "I am satisfied."

"Well, sir," said the woman, "as we were coming to England, they said they would come here too, for medam wished to get into

into her own country; and she said she would be nursed by nobody but me; and as we had then a decent house of our own like, and a spare parlour at Richmond, in Yorkshire, they said they would take it of us: and Mr. Curzon said as how he should teach gentlefolks to play upon music in that neighbourhood, because it would suit him, being very genteel like; and when every thing was settled, I thought she seemed a deal happier; and when we set sail, she said her heart was lighter a great deal now she was going to her own country; but dear heart, the storm came on soon, and both her and me was sadly frightened; and he did all he could to comfort her, for she would have it that it was a judgment upon her; and said she deserved it all; and then he said, I think I shall never forget it, 'Oh, Emily! how bitterly those tears reproach me!' and then she threw her arms round him, and said she loved him above all things, and that she would rather perish in the sea with him, than live in a palais without him; and then

then there was a dreadful scream, for the ship split on a rock, and four men, at that moment, sunk to rise no more; and Mrs. Curzon fell into her husband's arms, and said—'It is all over!' but he encouraged her and me too; and he said- Come. John, you and I are stout young fellows, let us save our wives, or die with them; and John and him, somehow, got some boards, and they fastened us to them, God knows how: but he was an excellent * swimmer, and he cheered my good man up; and, through God's blessing, somehow, he saved us all: and three other sailors. who were able to swim, got on shore, but the rest all perished. Our clothes were all lost entirely; but the Scotch folks were very kind to us, and in a little time, we began to think of setting off for Richmond, being John was very impatient to get home, because we had a little farm then, and we wanted to get our oats into the ground, and so-

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" Have

"Have you any thing more to say of Mrs. Curzon?"

"O dear yes, sir, I ben't come to the worst yet; for though she was sadly frightened, yet, all things considered, she was pretty well, and as impatient to get home as we could be; for poor young thing, she thought a great deal about her situation, as one may say, which was quite naturable, seeing she had no mother, nor any body near her like, and she hadn't a day to call her own, as 'twere; an so we set off our journey, when behold, at the first stage we got to, the people at the inn, just to amuse madam, brought in a newspaper, and she took it up and read a good while; but at last, when she came to look at t'other side, all at once, she went as white as a sheet, and dropt down in a fit, as dead as a stone; I really thought poor Mr. Curzon would have gone quite off in his mind; but after a deal of pains, at last she came to herself; but then she went into labour

labour directly, and we thought, for many hours, we really should have lost her; for dear heart, it was a bad country for getting any thing like proper help for such a lady as she.?

The general groaned aloud, his face was of a livid paleness, and large drops stood on his forehead. Lady Eleanor was going to withdraw with the poor woman, but he made a sign for her to go on.

"At last, sir, she was brought to bed of a fine little boy, but, dear heart, it died in half an hour, being, as the doctor said, as good as killed with that sad fit its poor mother got with reading the papers."

"This is my first murder!" cried the general, in extreme agony: "but go on, woman—go on."

"Dear heart, your honour, I've little more to say; poor Mrs. Curzon got well pretty tolerably, considering what she had gone through; but I observed that all the time we staid, which was three weeks, Mr. Curzon got the newspapers and destroyed.

them, as if it was by chance like that he did it: well, at last, one morning, when we got up, thinking to set off altogether, if we didn't find that Mr. and Mrs. Curzon were gone, and had left a letter for us, which we ha saved to this blessed day."

The man opened an old pocket-book, and unfolded a piece of wrapping-paper, out of which he took a time-worn letter, which he placed in lady Langdale's hand, which she read as follows:—

" MY GOOD FRIENDS,

"Circumstances, which it is not possible for me to explain, compel us to be wanderers; we are obliged to renounce our name and our country, and therefore cannot accompany you as we wished: we leave you in this sudden manner to spare us the pain of parting, which, after all my dear Emily has suffered of late, would be too much for her. I request you, my good

good friends, on no consideration, ever to allow my name to pass your lips; and if you are induced to speak of me, as, from your regard to us both, I am pretty certain you will, I beg that you will call me by the name of Wilson; and I promise you, that by this name, you shall occasionally hear of us, when we are so situated as to do it with safety.

"I enclose you a small bill, as a mark of our regard, knowing that Mary deserves much more at our hands, but will be willing to accept a little, when she knows, what is but too true, that at present we have nothing to spare.

"Farewell, my good faiends; may God bless you!

"Charles and Emily Curzon."

The solution of a

When this letter had been read, the getneral, with great anxiety, inquired if they had received any further intelligence? on. N 3 which **f**. . '

which the man said, that about a year after, they had a short letter, post paid, which was written by Mrs. Curzon, saying that she was become the mother of a little girl, likely for life; that the same reasons still existed as formerly for their concealment. and that she had suffered much since she sow them from parrow circumstances, but the kindness of her Charles made all things supportable: she begged us to burn this letter, which we accordingly did immediately; it had the Edinburgh postmark, but was signed by no other name than Emily. "The year following," added the man, with a sad countenance, "I was obliged to leave Rithmond, and of course, if any letters came to me there, they were lost long since, for I have had too many troubles myself ever to go into that part of the world to see after any thing."

"But, John, tell his honour all," said Mary.

"What she means by all is this—one day, about two years ago, I saw a gentle-man

man get out of a stage-coach, which I was sure could be no other than Mr. Curzon. though he looked so exceeding thin and ill, as if he was quite at the last, as 'twere, in a consumption; he went up stairs in the house, and I directly followed; and quite forgetting, seeing so many years were gone past, what he had told me about calling him Wilson, I told the waiter to go to the gentleman, and say, if his name was Curzon, I should be glad to speak to him. When the man came down stairs, he said, The gentleman says you are mistaken, he is not the person you want;' but the man said, 'I should not wonder if you are right; for when I mentioned his name, as pale as he looks, he grew ten times paler.' I was cut to the heart when I heard this," said the man, drawing the back of his rough hand over his eyes, "for, I loved him as I loved my own soul; but I determined to watch about the place, without noticing it to the waiter: but just as I turned to thank the man for his civility,

N 4 the

the stranger darted down stairs, jumped into a hackney-coach, which he had doubt-less beckoned to him from the window up stairs, and was soon beyond my view, though I ran after it as far as I had it in my power.—Well, your honour, I watched for several weeks afterwards at the doors of inns, and of the theatres, and other places, but never had the good luck to set my eyes on him again, nor I never shall now, for he was nearly gone, I fear, then; and who knows but my sad blunder might put him in such a fright as to hasten his end."

As the honest fellow spoke these words, he burst into tears, and his auditors wept with him, till lady Eleanor rung for her housekeeper, and told her to take care of the honest couple, whose detail had only served to awaken sorrow for objects whose situation was still involved in impenetrable obscurity, though one point at least was clearly ascertained, that they had escaped the shipwreck, and were living a considerable period afterwards.

After

out

After a long pause, the general spoke-"Perhaps," said he, "at this moment my child is a widow; it may be, with a family of children, and doubtless in great distress; in what a way must she have subsisted for years! I tremble to think of it. - Oh, Emily 2: Emily! lovely being! for whose feet the silken carpets of Persia were profusely spread—for whom the air was embalmed with odours, and who was clothed in allthe riches of Eastern magnificence—how have you suffered beneath the Northern blast, as it swept over your miserable cottage, and shrunk from the coarse food of: disgusting poverty !-Oh! the thought of my child's sufferings will drive me to distraction!"

"But, my dear sir," said Griselda, in the most soothing tones of pity, "you have one great consolation in the tenderness of her husband; that she suffered much sannot be doubted, but with a man whom she leved so truly, and who was so fondly devoted to her, much may be endured with-

n 5

A Section

out repining; and when you have once found her again, her past sufferings will be remembered as a dream; the children born in poverty may be reared in affluence, and their virtues may take a deeper root, from the stern soil in which they were implanted. Take courage, sir; depend upon it, something will yet be heard of these dear figitives; I yet hope your knees will be clasped as the grandsire of a blooming race."

"You are an angel of hope," said the general, pressing his quivering lips to her forehead, "and I will admit your prophecy; but you must leave me now to my dear Bleanor; I am sadly disordered, and fit for no other society than that kind being's, who was in mercy sent to restore me to my God and to myself. Go, my good girl; but carry this with you—that though the world abounds with sorrow, there is no dart in the quiver of affliction that can be compared with unavailing repentance and fruitless remuse."

Griselda

Griselda took her leave, and returning home, found cards from lady Castlehowek for the masked ball she had spoken of: at one time it had been her full intention to have declined this invitation entirely: but the glance she had of the gentleman in the curricle ran in her mind, and she concluded, that if it were sir Edward who had been driving her ladyship, she should probably hear some development, which might render her easy; for notwithstanding all her reasoning on the subject, and the apparent candour of sir Edward, easy. she could not be without some further light on the subject; and her trouble increased! from the manners of her husband, which, at every interview, became evidently more: constrained and forbidding; he appeared far from well, yet was so angry if medical assistance was recommended, that Griselda ceased to offer any rand was obliged to be content to suffer in silence. Her fears being rather more awakened for his conduct than: his health, which she thought suffered only.

from concealed uneasiness; she was the better enabled to submit to his resolution of denying a physician; but the tender goncern she felt for him rendered it far more difficult to find herself denied the privilege of sharing in his troubles and alleviating his chagrin, of whatever nature it might be; and she was many times on the point of entreating him to confide in her love; but some unkind word or look at these moments fell like an ice-bolt on her heart, and repelled the warm effusion. She struggled, however, with the feelings she could not subdue, and in the society of her happier friend, Mrs. Barnet, or in the confidential intercourse she now held at general Harcourt's, endeavoured to regain serenity or suspend affliction. Conscious that the clouded brow of a wife is the least likely means to regain a wandering, or fix an inconstant heart, she struggled to preserve a cheerful countenance, and to furnish her mind with such information as she knew was most likely to amuse sir Edward... during

during the short time he now spent with her; and she had generally the satisfaction to see his brow expand, and his hilarity increase, before he left her; and there were times when he condescended to regret his engagements; but yet, by some means, they were continually renewed, for he was always going out, and very seldom mentioned the place of his destination, even to his valet.

When the general had somewhat recovered from the severe suffering, occasioned by the examination we have detailed, he sent for the poor couple again; and having obtained a little history, which included much of that vulgar sorrow the great could always relieve, would they condescend to hear it, he inquired if they would like to return to Richmond, and to live there?

"Like!" exclaimed they both, "we should like it indeed!"

"Then you shall go," said the general,
and I will take care that you shall be
made

made comfortable there; but it must be on the express condition, that you shall make every possible inquiry whether any letters have been left for you during your absence? and that if any circumstance throws the least possible light on the present situation of Mrs. Curzon, you must not lose an hour in acquainting me with it. I shall settle an annuity upon you both, which shall be continued, or otherwise, as you are diligent in this inquiry."

thanks, this offer was instantly accepted; and poor John Mellor and his wife, after a lamentable abode in London of near sixteen years, set out, with light hearts and heavy purses, to their native fields in Yorkshire. In Richmond they knew many who had forgot them, but found others willing to remember them; but true to their trust, their first great inquiry lay with the postmaster, who, in their absence, had been changed, but was civil enough to listen to their inquiries with an air of interest; he said.

said he knew nothing of any letters that had ever come into his hands, but remembered, that on his first coming into the office, about fourteen years ago, a gentleman had one day inquired if he could give him the address of one Mellor, who had, he understood, been unfortunate as a farmer, and had left the place about a year before?

"What sort of a man was he?" said Mary, impatiently.

"He was tall and slender, with very fine eyes," said the postmaster, "and a sunburnt skin; and his wife was the prettiest woman I have seen since I came to Richmond."

The good couple looked at each other in. astonishment a moment, then turning to their informer, begged he would tell them if he thought they had any children?

"They had two," returned the postmaster; "and if you are Mellor, as I suppose you are, I have no doubt but they intended to have left their children with you; for when I had given the gentleman an assur-

ance that I knew nothing about you, he turned to the lady, and said, 'Well, Emily, it is all over; we have lost our poor friends, it seems, and our children must accompany us.'-I remember it all," said the postmaster, "very well, for two reasons, one was, because I was only just come to this place; and the other was, because there was something about this couple so sweet, and yet so sorrowful, that I could think of nothing else for a long time; and particularly thought it odd that such a fine gentleman as this seemed to be should call John Mellor, who the neighbours described as a plain country farmer of the lower class, friend."

the postmaster at Richmond had not read Sancho Panza's proverb, that "Misery makes a man acquainted with strange bed-fellows." Both his auditors, however, assured him that the gentleman in question was a gentleman, and a very fine one too, for all he was so humble like as to call them friends;

friends; and they went forwards to tell him so much of the affair, that he offered to write an account of this interview for them to the general, which was an offer thankfully accepted by John, as he justly observed he was no great scholard; and though Mary could manage it better than him, yet she had ratherly a round about way with her that might make th' old gentleman angry. To this Mary said she had no objection, provided he took a great sheet, and left her room to put in summut ath' bottom, which she had forgot, and which it was right should be told."

This letter reached the general when Griselda was sitting with him about a week after John Mellor's departure; and seeing who it was from, he requested her to read it, which she did, with equal pleasure and facility, so long as the postmaster indited; but was somewhat puzzled, and still more affected, on perusing the postscript by Mary.

"I hops your honnor will forgive me, but I forgot to menshon one thing, which hurts my conshens, being, as I think, a great cumfort to your honnor: when poor madam Curzon was got to bed, and had seen her good husben, who, pore soul, was far more like a corse than she with frotting; and when he had tried to cumfort her for the loss of the little boy, so that at last, poor thing, she fell asleep as he knelt by the side of her bed; and then he got up, and he rolled up the babe in its flannels, and went into the garden, and I watched him, for it was brite moonlite, and he dug a little grave, with his own hands, and buried the pore little thing very deep, and when he had covered it up, he moved a rose-tree and planted it there; and then he kneeled down on the ground, and prayed for a. long time: I shall never forget him, please your honnor, how he looked with his eyes turned up, and the tears running down his cheeks, so that I am sure he was praying for his wife; and, sure enuff, God answered

answered his prayers, for she slept all night, and came on finely ever after: and I maid bold to tell your honnor this, for I thought it would be a grate blessing for you to know your child, if her lot be poor, has got a Christan husben."

God of mercies, I do thank thee!"said the general, bowing his head in sign
of grateful adoration, while the tears coursed each other down his furrowed cheek; and
lady Eleanor and Griselda silently partook
his devout emotion; but the latter felt the
sublime sentiment of divine gratitude
blended with regret, that it was not shared
by him with whom she wished to participate every sensation of felicity, and every
emanation of divine consolation,

END OF VQL. I.

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